

**ASPECTS OF CROWN
ADMINISTRATION AND SOCIETY
IN THE COUNTY OF
NORTHUMBERLAND, c. 1400- c. 1450.**

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Abstract

This is a study of a local society and its interaction with central government observed through routine administrative systems. Although Northumberland has been the focus of detailed investigation during the late middle ages, a gap in scholarship remains for much of the first half of the fifteenth century. As England's most northerly county, work on the relationship between provincial society, peripheries of the realm and the crown is critical to this study. This research tests assumptions that Northumberland was feudal, lawless, distant and difficult for the crown to administer.

The research consists of two parts: the first is an evaluation of social structure; the second explores the administrative machine. It opens with a survey of feudal tenure. Chapter two examines the wealth of resident landholders. Chapter three outlines the genealogies of landed society and their relationship to one another as a 'county community'. Chapter four expands on family connections to incorporate the bond of spiritual kinship. Chapter five charts the scope of social networks disclosed through the management of property, personal affairs and dispute. Chapter six considers the inquisitions *post mortem* (IPM) process and the impact of distance. Chapter seven discusses jurors and their place in county society.

Original contributions to knowledge are made in a number of areas. The theme of spiritual kinship has not been developed in any county study of this period. Additional information concerning the county return for the 1435 subsidy on land is provided, which has previously been overlooked. The location of a copy of the escheator's oath created in response to a statute of 1429, which has not been captured in recent studies, resolves the current ambiguity concerning the statutory requirement of an indented inquisition return.

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Abbreviations

<i>AA</i>	<i>Archaeologia Aeliana</i>
<i>BIHR</i>	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research</i>
<i>CCR</i>	<i>Calendar of Close Rolls</i>
<i>CDRS</i>	<i>Calendar of Documents Relating to Scotland</i>
<i>CFR</i>	<i>Calendar of Fine Rolls</i>
<i>CIM</i>	<i>Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous</i>
<i>CIPM</i>	<i>Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem</i>
<i>CPR</i>	<i>Calendar of Patent Rolls</i>
<i>EHR</i>	<i>English Historical Review</i>
<i>FA</i>	<i>Feudal Aids</i>
<i>HN</i>	<i>A History of Northumberland</i>
<i>HOC</i>	<i>The History of Parliament: The House of Commons</i>
<i>HR</i>	<i>Historical Research</i>
<i>JMH</i>	<i>Journal of Medieval History</i>
<i>MS</i>	<i>Medieval Studies</i>
<i>NCH</i>	<i>Northumberland County History</i>
<i>NDD</i>	<i>Northumberland and Durham Deeds</i>
<i>NH</i>	<i>Northern History</i>
<i>ODNB</i>	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i>
<i>P&P</i>	<i>Past and Present</i>
<i>PROME</i>	<i>The Parliament Rolls of Medieval England</i>
<i>SHR</i>	<i>The Scottish Historical Review</i>
<i>SS</i>	<i>Surtees Society</i>
<i>TNA: PRO</i>	<i>The National Archives: Public Record Office</i>
<i>TRHS</i>	<i>Transactions of the Royal Historical Society</i>

All works are cited in full in the bibliography.

Introduction

The representation of the fifteenth century as an anarchic period was embedded in the public psyche through the staging of William Shakespeare's historical cycle of eight plays, which cover the reigns of Richard II to Richard III.¹ The cycle carries the theme of civil strife as divine retribution for the deposition of Richard II by Henry Bolingbroke, duke of Lancaster. In *Richard II* the bishop of Carlisle forewarns; 'the blood of English shall manure the ground/And future ages groan for this foul act'.² Dynastic conflict between the houses of York and Lancaster caused England to descend into chaos, until it was rescued by the intervention of Henry Tudor. A Lancastrian claimant to the throne, Tudor's defeat of Richard III at the battle of Bosworth brought the civil war to an end and, as king Henry VII, his marriage to Elizabeth of York united the warring dynasties. Shakespeare's cycle was, of course, a retrospective interpretation of events for public entertainment. Tudor's grand-daughter, Elizabeth I, then reigned as queen but the playwright had no need to peddle the political line. The victor's narrative had already taken hold in early Tudor propaganda and through the writings of Edward Hall, Sir Thomas Smith and Raphael Holinshed.

¹ This discussion of the historiography of the fifteenth century is drawn from A.J. Pollard, *Late Medieval England 1399-1509* (Harlow, 2000), pp. 1-15; idem, 'Introduction: Society, Politics and the Wars of the Roses', in idem (ed.), *The Wars of the Roses* (Basingstoke, 1995), pp. 1-19; R.H. Britnell and A.J. Pollard, 'Introduction', in idem (eds), *The McFarlane Legacy: Studies in Late Medieval Politics and Society* (Stroud, 1995), pp. xi-xii.

² Shakespeare, *Richard II*, Act IV, Sc. I, lines 138-39.

By the mid-nineteenth century perceptions of the past were shaped by the Whig interpretation of history. In this reading, the new middle classes in coalition with the Tudors displaced the old feudal aristocracy and then restored social and political order. It was founded on the belief in an ancient constitution and that the continuity of a limited monarchy, parliament and the rule of the common law, had marked England out a providential place in the world. In the Victorian era, this exalted position was reflected in the dominance of scientific and technological developments and the rule of a vast empire. Thomas Babington Macaulay, historian, Whig MP and man of letters, summed up the grand narrative: “The history of England is emphatically the history of progress”.³ The fifteenth century, however, was a nasty blot on the landscape of ascent; a haunting reminder that things could go wrong. Bishop William Stubbs, who believed that constitutional history was the only history of any worth, reviewed the impact of the age and concluded that there was no advancement in any sphere; it was the ‘dark age’ before the Tudors.⁴

Academic historians at the end of the nineteenth century trod the same path. In 1885 Charles Plummer branded ‘bastard feudalism’ as the root cause of the perversion of justice, aristocratic disorder and civil unrest, which he believed originated during the reign of Edward III. The phrase, his own creation, stemmed from the belief that the relationship between lord and man that existed in land under the feudal system had been debased by the substitution of monetary fees to indentured retainers for life. Thus:

³ J.M. and M.J. Cohen, *The New Penguin Dictionary of Quotations* (London, 2002), p. 262.

⁴ W. Stubbs, *The Constitutional History of England in its Origin and Development*, 3 vols, 5th edn (Oxford, 1897), vol. 3, 613.

a horde of retainers ... wore his lord's livery and fought his battles, and were in the most literal sense of the words, in the law courts and elsewhere, 'Addicti jurare in verba magistri' (sworn on oath to their masters); while he in turn maintained their quarrels and shielded their crimes from punishment. This evil ... reached its greatest height during the Lancastrian period.⁵

Revisionist studies contested the impression of a period of social and political turmoil, that the wars were continuous and impacted upon the population at large, but the Whig interpretation held firm until the mid-twentieth century when it was challenged by an alternative reading.⁶ In the early 1960s K.B. McFarlane argued that England was not saved from a flawed aristocracy by the new Tudor monarchy and that there was no rise of the middle class. The wars were not the result of overmighty subjects but caused by the ineptness of Henry VI, an undermighty king.⁷

McFarlane was instrumental in the scholarly rehabilitation of the fifteenth century, historical practice and its subsequent popularity as an area of study. Under his stewardship, the emphasis shifted from nation-centred institutional and constitutional history to the personal politics of patronage and clientage. The approach was disseminated by his students who moved into academic posts and, in turn, by their own students. To some extent, McFarlane's influence was due to the good fortune of being in exactly the right place at exactly the right time. The post-war baby boom had fuelled the expansion of higher education, social and economic history was in vogue and

⁵ J. Fortescue, *The Governance of England*, ed. C. Plummer (Oxford, 1885), pp. 15-16.

⁶ J.E.T. Rogers, *Six Centuries of Work and Wages* (London, 1886); J.R. Green, *A Short History of the English People*, 3rd edn (London, 1916); C.L. Kingsford, *Prejudice and Promise in Fifteenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1925).

⁷ K.B. McFarlane, *England in the Fifteenth Century: Collected Essays* (London, 1981), pp. 231-67.

archival material was much more accessible than it had been previously. McFarlane's life work, never completed, was to analyse thoroughly the English governing classes in order to understand the history of late medieval England.

Plummer's dismal view that 'bastard feudalism' was responsible for the troubles of the late middle ages was initially challenged by McFarlane and closely scrutinized by other historians in the twentieth century.⁸ This work concluded that Plummer had erroneously attributed a distinctiveness to the age and interpreted bastard feudalism in a more positive light as a neutral social system that could be employed for good or ill.⁹ Feudalism and bastard feudalism co-existed long before the fifteenth century and for centuries afterward.¹⁰ Retaining had ancient antecedents as a means of raising royal armies and the practice continued throughout the sixteenth century.¹¹ More importantly, large-scale retaining was exceptional, generally restricted to magnates and tied to military functions.¹²

Retaining was but the 'tip of the iceberg', the most formal aspect of 'good lordship'.¹³ A retainer was just one element of a lord's affinity, a fluctuating range of connections

⁸ McFarlane, *England in the Fifteenth Century*, pp. 23-44.

⁹ For traditional views see M. Hicks, *Bastard Feudalism* (Harlow, 1995), p. 33.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

¹¹ P.R. Coss, 'Bastard Feudalism Revised', *P&P*, 125 (1989), 27-64. Also see P.R. Coss, D. Crouch and D. Carpenter, 'Debate: Bastard Feudalism Revised', *P&P*, 131 (1991), 165-77; Hicks, *Bastard Feudalism*, p. 34.

¹² For example, S. Walker, *The Lancastrian Affinity, 1361-1399* (Oxford, 1990).

¹³ A.J. Pollard, *North-Eastern England during the Wars of the Roses: Lay Society, War and Politics 1450-1500* (Oxford, 1990), p. 122.

that also incorporated the family, household, staff, tenants and well-wishers.¹⁴ Good lordship and its reciprocal, service, was of mutual benefit and the cement that held society together.¹⁵ An indenture of retainer was not necessarily a lifelong or singular commitment. The relationship could be terminated by either party 'by mutual consent or one-sided action' and a man might be retained by more than one lord concurrently.¹⁶ Nevertheless, most were long-standing, faithful servants.¹⁷ Other studies stressed the intervention of magnates and the deployment of their councils in resolving conflict, thus highlighting their role as a stabilising force.¹⁸ Contrary to the view that lords maintained their men in quarrels, these affiliations did not generally prevent the delivery of a fair award in the wider interest of 'good lordship'.¹⁹ Even in the Tudor north of England, Mervyn James found a 'conservative society respectful of birth, rank, tradition and custom in which bastard feudal connections were a force for stability, order and justice'.²⁰

¹⁴ Ibid.; W.M. Ormrod, *Political Life in Medieval England, 1300-1450* (Basingstoke, 1995), p. 51; S.M. Wright, *The Derbyshire Gentry in the Fifteenth Century* (Chesterfield, 1983), p. 65.

¹⁵ For example, R.E. Horrox, 'Service', in eadem (ed.), *Fifteenth-Century Attitudes: Perceptions of Society in Late Medieval England* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 61-78.

¹⁶ McFarlane, *England in the Fifteenth Century*, p. 38; Horrox, in eadem (ed.), *Fifteenth-Century Attitudes*, p. 71.

¹⁷ For example, Pollard, *North-Eastern England*, p. 139.

¹⁸ See, for example, C. Carpenter, 'The Beauchamp Affinity: A Study of Bastard Feudalism at Work', *EHR*, 95 (1980), 514-32; C. Rawcliffe, 'Baronial Councils in the Later Middle Ages', in C.D. Ross (ed.), *Patronage, Pedigree and Power in Later Medieval England* (Gloucester, 1979), pp. 87-108; eadem, 'The Great Lord as Peacekeeper: Arbitration by English Noblemen and their Councils in the Later Middle Ages', in J.A. Guy and H.G. Beales (eds), *Law and Social Change in British History* (London, 1984), pp. 34-54; C. Rawcliffe and S. Flower, 'English Noblemen and their Advisers: Consultation and Collaboration in the Later Middle Ages', *Journal of British Studies*, 25 (1986), 157-77. For professional administrators see R.A. Griffiths, 'Public and Private Bureaucracies in England and Wales in the Fifteenth Century', *TRHS*, 5th ser., 30 (1980), 109-30.

¹⁹ For example, M.A. Hicks, 'Restraint, Mediation and Private Justice: George Duke of Clarence as "Good Lord"', *Journal of Legal History*, 4 (1983), 56-71.

²⁰ Hicks, *Bastard Feudalism*, pp. 34-35.

The methodology to complete McFarlane's work emerged in early modern studies and the concept of the 'county community'. Alan Everitt introduced the term in his monograph of the Kentish gentry during the English civil war, building upon a tradition of county studies that began with antiquarian accounts of the sixteenth century.²¹ Adopting a provincial outlook on events, he defended his approach on the grounds that 'despite its ancient centralized government, the England of 1640 resembled a union of partially independent county states or communities, each with its own distinct ethos and loyalty'.²² Everitt's methodology was particularly appealing to scholars of other periods because it offered an easy way to conduct research as crown records were arranged on county lines.²³

Medievalists examined social and political structures from two perspectives, baronial families or county studies, based on units of royal administration, to consider the gentry.²⁴ Opinion differed where political power lay. Some held that the vertical tie of the magnate affinity was the critical force as it incorporated gentry networks and gave lords control over the locality; others insisted that the county had a real identity, that

²¹ A. Everitt, *The Community of Kent and the Great Rebellion 1640-60* (Leicester, 1973). For the development of county studies in historical writing see A. Gransden, *Legends, Tradition and History in Medieval England* (London, 1992), pp. 299-333.

²² Everitt, *Community of Kent*. p. 13.

²³ C. Carpenter, 'Gentry and Community in Medieval England', *Journal of British Studies*, 33 (1994), 241-42.

²⁴ For examples of magnate studies see, H. Castor, *The King, Crown and Duchy of Lancaster: Public Authority and Private Power 1399-1461* (Oxford, 2000); M.A. Hicks, *False, Fleeting, Perjur'd Clarence: George, Duke of Clarence 1449-78* (Bangor, 1992). For examples of county studies see C. Carpenter, *Locality and Polity: A Study of Warwickshire Landed Society, 1401-1499* (Cambridge, 1992); S.J. Payling, *Political Society in Lancastrian England: The Greater Gentry of Nottinghamshire* (Oxford, 1991).

horizontal bonds amongst the gentry enabled them to operate corporately as a 'county community' and govern independently of the nobility.²⁵

As research developed, the notion that the gentry's sense of belonging was defined by artificial administrative divisions vied with another spatial model that Everitt established later in his career based on the natural landscape, the *pays*.²⁶ Making use of the French geographical concept, Everitt proposed that the English countryside consisted of distinctive areas whose physical features shaped economic activities, patterns of settlement and social organisation. In this construct the geography and topography of an area, which could be smaller or larger than the county, determined the configuration of social relations.

Charles Phythian-Adams adapted Everitt's model and divided pre-modern England into fourteen cultural provinces, now referred to as regional societies, that predominately corresponded with major drainage basins whose watersheds represented frontier zones.²⁷ These theoretical frameworks are not necessarily incompatible. Boundaries were not impervious unless people had an investment in regarding them as so.²⁸ A

²⁵ G.L. Harriss, *Shaping the Nation: England, 1360-1461* (Oxford, 2004), p. 187.

For a synthesis of the work on county communities see R. Virgoe, 'Aspects of the County Community in the Fifteenth Century', in M. Hicks (ed.), *Profit, Piety and the Professions in Later Medieval England* (Gloucester, 1990), pp. 1-13.

²⁶ A. Everitt, 'Country, County and Town: Patterns of Regional Evolution in England', *TRHS*, 5th ser., 29 (1979), 79-108.

²⁷ C. Phythian-Adams, 'Introduction: An Agenda for English Local History', in idem (ed.), *Societies, Cultures and Kinship, 1580-1850: Cultural Provinces in English Local History* (Leicester, 1993), pp. 1-23.

²⁸ A. Green and A.J. Pollard, 'Introduction', in idem (eds), *Regional Identities in Northern England 1300-2000* (Woodbridge, 2007), p. 16.

sense of belonging to the body of the shire, as it appears in the Paston Letters, was just one of several associations with which the gentry might affiliate themselves, ranging from the parochial to the realm, that were not mutually exclusive.²⁹

The existence of ‘county communities’ and McFarlane’s influence on the research agenda subsequently became controversial issues. Aside from the hackneyed use of the term ‘community’, cloaked by ‘its conceptual vagueness and its rhetorical warmth’ and the importance given to the ruling élites as a distortion of political society, criticism was levelled at the emphasis on patronage and clientage.³⁰ McFarlane’s legacy was ‘overmighty’ and had been taken too far. Individual attitudes, beliefs and principles were just as significant in shaping political action; a ‘new constitutional history’ was proposed as the way forward.³¹ The county debate began to fizzle out shortly thereafter as the weight of opinion came to rest on the magnate affinity.³²

²⁹ Virgoe, in Hicks, *Profit, Piety and the Professions*, p. 5; Carpenter, ‘Gentry and Community’, 345-46, 348-50; eadem, ‘The Stonor Circle in the Fifteenth Century’, in R.E. Archer and S. Walker (eds), *Rulers and Ruled in Late Medieval England* (London, 1995), pp. 175-214.

³⁰ The phrase is found in A. Shepard and P. Withington, ‘Introduction’, in idem (eds), *Communities in Early Modern England: Networks, Place, Rhetoric* (Manchester, 2000), p. 2, but the critique belongs to Carpenter, ‘Gentry and Community’, 340-44, 352. For a delayed defence of county communities see S. Walker, *Political Culture in Late Medieval England* (Manchester, 2006), pp. 68-80.

³¹ For example, see C. Richmond, ‘After McFarlane’, *History*, 68 (1983), 46-60; E. Powell, ‘After ‘After McFarlane’: The Poverty of Patronage and the Case for Constitutional History’, in D.G. Clayton, R.G. Davies and P. McNiven (eds), *Trade, Devotion and Governance* (Stroud, 1994), pp. 1-16; C. Carpenter, ‘Political and Constitutional History: Before and After McFarlane’, in R.H. Britnell and A.J. Pollard (eds), *The McFarlane Legacy* (Stroud, 2005), pp. 175-206; J.L. Watts, ‘Ideas, Principles and Politics’, in A.J. Pollard (ed.), *The Wars of the Roses* (Basingstoke, 1995), pp. 110-33.

³² For example, see Pollard, in idem (ed.), *Wars of the Roses*, pp. 8-9; Payling, *Political Society*, p. 105.

Recent scholarship has investigated political society in greater breadth and depth. Attention eventually turned to English medieval liberties, franchises and immunities that were in the possession of private individuals or institutions and outside the jurisdiction of the king and his officers. The importance of these entities in government and society had previously been overlooked; a consequence of the historiographical emphasis placed on the power of the county and state.³³ This research now sits with other work on liberties and franchises in Wales, Ireland and Scotland to be seen in a wider British context.³⁴

Traditionally perceived in terms of legal and constitutional history, these structures have been regarded as contingent on the crown, ‘anomalies’ and ‘manifestations of unacceptable failure on behalf of the state’ to exercise direct control until they were integrated into English royal government under the Tudors.³⁵ A number of scholars have disputed such notions. Rees Davies, for example, urged historians ‘to recognize that medieval government was less uniform and unipartite than *étatist* story-lines presupposes’.³⁶ Studies of the palatinates of Cheshire and Durham by Tim Thornton

³³ R. Frame, ‘States, Liberties and Communities in Medieval Britain and Ireland (c.1100-1400)’, in M. Prestwich (ed.), *Liberties and Identities in the Medieval British Isles* (Woodbridge, 2008), p. 5.

³⁴ For example, see M. Prestwich (ed.), *Liberties and Identities in the Medieval British Isles*; M.L. Holford and K.J. Stringer, *Border Liberties and Loyalties: North East England, c. 1200-c. 1400* (Edinburgh, 2010) and see fn.36 below.

³⁵ Prestwich, ‘Introduction’, in idem (ed.), *Liberties and Identities*, p. 2. For the historiography also see Holford and Stringer, *Border Liberties and Loyalties*, pp. 1-8.

³⁶ Cited by Frame, in Prestwich, *Liberties and Identities*, p. 8.

and Christian Liddy have underlined their independence and ability to foster local identities.³⁷

The main strand of research has considered the opinions and engagement of the bulk of the population beneath the ruling élite. Studies of popular participation in politics have generally concentrated on disruptive behaviour in terms of resistance, demonstrations, riots and uprisings.³⁸ If members of the nobility were able to gain popular support in revolts during the 1450s and 1460s, they could only do so because widespread discontent existed.³⁹ Yet ‘social conflict and unrest needs to be seen in a broader context of day-to-day consensual politics in which the resort to violence was but the last resort’.⁴⁰ ‘Some of the people for some of the time enjoyed a measure of involvement not only in politics as a whole, but also to a limited extent, in parliamentary affairs’.⁴¹ Participation in politics was also a local affair. In civic life, ‘petitioning was the mechanism by which ordinary citizens, individually and collectively, could influence the formulation of a city’s policies through the issue of by-

³⁷ Holford and Stringer, *Border Liberties and Loyalties*, pp. 5-8, references to various pieces of work by Thornton and Liddy can be found at p.6, fn. 24.

³⁸ For example, I.M.W. Harvey, *Jack Cade’s Rebellion of 1450* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 155-75; P. Franklin, ‘Politics in Manorial Court Rolls: The Tactics, Social Composition and Aims of a pre-1381 Peasant Movement’, in Z. Ravi and R. Smith (eds), *Medieval Society and the Manor Court* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 162-98.

³⁹ Pollard, *Late Medieval England*, p. 254.

⁴⁰ Idem, ‘The People, Politics and the Constitution in the Fifteenth Century’, in R.W. Kaeuper, P. Dingman and P. Sposato (eds), *Law, Governance, and Justice: New Views on Medieval Constitutionalism* (Leiden, 2013), pp. 311-29.

⁴¹ Idem, ‘The People and Parliament in Fifteenth-Century England’, in H. Kleineke (ed.), *The Fifteenth Century X: Parliament, Personalities and Power* (Woodbridge, 2011), pp. 1-16.

laws'.⁴² In the economic organisation of the parish, through representatives like churchwardens, parishioners assumed an increasing role in the late medieval church.⁴³ Within the village, Christopher Dyer observed that 'the machinery of government ... is conveniently divided between the institutions shaped from the outside (by the state, lords and church) and those devised from within'.⁴⁴ Moreover, villagers were regularly drawn into a wider orbit as jurors in royal administration.⁴⁵

There would seem to be some room then for a different approach to looking at counties and their relationships with the crown which is neither focussed on baronial affinities nor on office holding but seeks to identify how local societies at different levels interacted with royal administration.

II

The North of England

A study of the north cuts across two historiographical themes: the political relationship between centre and periphery and perceptions of a north-south divide. For McFarlane, the failure of English government in the middle of century was due entirely to the

⁴² C.D. Liddy and J. Haemers, 'Popular Politics in the Late Medieval City: York and Bruges', *EHR*, 128 (2013), 781-82.

⁴³ B. Kümin, *The Shaping of a Community: The Rise and Reformation of the English Parish* (Aldershot, 1996).

⁴⁴ C. Dyer, 'The Political Life of the Fifteenth-Century English Village', in L. Clark and C. Carpenter (eds), *The Fifteenth Century IV: Political Culture in Late Medieval Britain* (Woodbridge, 2004), p. 139.

⁴⁵ R. Goheen, 'Peasant Politics? Village Community and the Crown in Fifteenth-Century England', *American Historical Review*, 96 (1991), 43-62.

personal ineptitude of Henry VI. In his words, ‘only an undermighty ruler had anything to fear from overmighty subjects; and if he were undermighty his personal lack of fitness was the cause, not the weakness of his office and its resources’.⁴⁶ Ralph Griffiths, on the other hand, has argued that the capacity of the crown was limited, and that this weakness was fundamental to the breakdown. The dominions were too remote, too large, too complex and too expensive to be governed effectively by almost any king.⁴⁷ The provinces of the realm, Wales and the marches, the far north and Ireland, which were furthest from Westminster, were also difficult to rule:

In Wales and Ireland, ... with local loyalties to local lords paramount, the government did not have the resources or the personnel or even the will to assert its authority at such distances and over lordships and shires that enjoyed a marked degree of independence and practical autonomy ... in the northern borderland the financial and logistical problems were just as formidable, and were accentuated by noble divisions between, especially, the Nevilles, who came to support the duke of York, and the Percy earls of Northumberland, who consequently clung to Lancaster.⁴⁸

Although liberties existed elsewhere in the kingdom, within England the largest in terms of geographical area and in the extent of independence were situated in the north.⁴⁹ In addition, the military defence of the northern border was a delegated responsibility. In the absence of a standing army, the English crown’s rejection of the

⁴⁶ McFarlane, *England in the Fifteenth Century*, pp. 238-39.

⁴⁷ R.A. Griffiths ‘The Provinces and the Dominions in the Age of the Wars of the Roses’, in S.D. Michalove and A.C. Reeves (eds), *Estrangement, Enterprise and Education in Fifteenth-Century England* (Stroud, 1998), pp. 1-25. Robin Storey and J.R Lander have also taken the same view, see p. 13 below.

⁴⁸ Griffiths, in Michalove and Reeves, *Estrangement, Enterprise and Education*, p. 13.

⁴⁹ R. Lomas, *County of Conflict: Northumberland from Conquest to Civil War* (East Linton, 1996), p. 136.

sovereign status of Scotland led to the creation of 'wardens of the east and west marches' in the mid-fourteenth century.⁵⁰ A warden thus 'raised his own army at the king's expense'⁵¹ For most of the fifteenth century the east and west marches were granted to Percy and Neville respectively, who could draw manpower from their large northern estates. The danger in this arrangement was that those forces might be turned against the crown. If by adding 'royal to seigneurial authority' the king was 'wholly dependent on these over-mighty subjects', it was because he had no choice.⁵²

Writing earlier than Griffiths, Robin Storey and J.R. Lander also believed the north was difficult to rule. Storey noted that local allegiances were centred on feudal relationships: 'for the society of the English border counties the local lord commanded more respect than the distant king'.⁵³ J.R. Lander, regarded the north as a deep, isolated and unruly frontier zone: 'violent, and remote from the centre of government, harried from Scotland, the north found adequate rulers only in the great local families, the Percys, the Nevilles, the Dacres and the Cliffords'.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ The function of the wardenries had earlier antecedents and the role later encompassed judicial and administrative obligations and powers, see R.R. Reid, 'The Office of Warden of the Marches; Its Origin and Early History', *EHR*, 32 (1917), 482-83; R.L. Storey, 'The Wardens of the Marches of England towards Scotland, 1377-1489', *EHR*, 72 (1957), 594.

⁵¹ R.L. Storey, 'The North of England', in S.B. Chrimes, C.D. Ross and R.A. Griffiths (eds), *Fifteenth-Century England 1399-1509: Studies in Politics and Society* (Manchester, 1972), p. 134.

⁵² Reid, 'The Office of Warden', 488.

⁵³ Storey, in Chrimes et al., *Fifteenth-Century England*, p. 132.

⁵⁴ J.R. Lander, *Conflict and Stability in Fifteenth-Century England*, 3rd edn (London, 1977), p. 179.

McFarlane was not the only scholar to offer a new interpretation of the origin of the wars. Around the same time, Robin Storey argued that the cause was to be found in the shires, a consequence of tensions in magnate and gentry society that escalated into private feuds.⁵⁵ Mervyn James subsequently proposed that silly quarrels turned into violent action as a result of the constant competition for honour that was based on a long-established military and chivalric tradition'.⁵⁶ In Storey's opinion, it was northern dispute between the Percy earls of Northumberland and the Nevilles that led to the collapse of government and civil war. Historians have favoured McFarlane's interpretation over that of Storey but as Ralph Griffiths remarked, the quarrel was 'unusually crucial in the passage of events toward the outbreak of war'.⁵⁷ It was one instance, amongst others, of the 'influence [the north] exercised in the affairs of the kingdom as a whole'.⁵⁸

The location of 'the north', however, is not easy to pin down. Its boundaries were imprecise and fluctuating.⁵⁹ As the modern historian Stuart Rawnsley has noted, 'paradoxically, the fact that the geographical location is so ill-defined is an important

⁵⁵ R.L. Storey, *The End of the House of Lancaster* (London, 1966), pp. 193-94. For a detailed analysis of events see R.A. Griffiths, 'Local Rivalries and National Politics: the Percies, the Nevilles, and the Duke of Exeter, 1452-55', *Speculum*, 43 (1968), 589-632.

⁵⁶ M.E. James, *Society, Politics and Culture: Studies in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 10, 308-9. James's essay on the concept of honour first appeared in 1978, i.e. one decade later than Storey's work. Cf. M. Keen, 'Chivalry', in R. Radelescu and A. Truelove (eds), *Gentry Culture in Late Medieval England*. (Manchester, 2005), pp. 44-45.

⁵⁷ For reactions to Storey's interpretation see K. Dockray, 'The Origins of the Wars of the Roses', in A.J. Pollard (ed.), *The Wars of the Roses* (Basingstoke, 1995), pp. 77-78. Citation at p. 77.

⁵⁸ Storey, in Chrimes et al., *Fifteenth-Century England*, p. 129.

⁵⁹ J. Le Patourel, 'Is Northern History a Subject?', *NH*, 12 (1976), 1-15; H. M. Jewell, *The North-South Divide: The Origins of Northern Consciousness in England* (Manchester, 1994).

reason why that sense of place has been condensed and distilled with such intensity'.⁶⁰ The idea of the north was moulded into a stereotype, 'often portrayed as distinct, remote, separate, feudal, backward, lawless, undeveloped, and only loosely attached to the metropolitan centre of English power and administration'.⁶¹ R.R. Reid, for example, writing in 1921, wrote that 'the north remained untouched by the economic, social and intellectual changes that were breaking up medieval society in the south'.⁶² The characterization has in part withstood the long test of time. Helen Jewell has explored the 'long ancestry of today's sense of difference' between the north and south of England.⁶³

In essence, the north was seen as a wild, uncivilized and lawless region.⁶⁴ This perception can be traced back to William of Newburgh in the mid-twelfth century but the image took a firm hold during the fifteenth century. It began with the critical account of Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini, later Pope Pius II, who recalled a visit to Scotland in 1436 and an unpleasant stay in the borders during a Scottish raid in his memoirs. In his mind, 'Scotland and that part of England nearest to it was rude, uncultivated, and unvisited by the winter sun' it was only when he reached Newcastle

⁶⁰ S. Rawnsley, 'Constructing 'The North': Space and a Sense of Place', in N. Kirk (ed.), *Northern Identities: Historical Interpretations of 'The North' and 'Northernness'* (Ashgate, 2000), pp. 3-22.

⁶¹ J.C. Appleby and P. Dalton, 'Editors Introduction', in idem (eds), *Government, Religion and Society in the North of England 1000-1700* (Stroud, 1997), pp. vii-viii.

⁶² Cited in Pollard, *North-Eastern England*, p. 2.

⁶³ Jewell, *North-South Divide*, p. 208.

⁶⁴ For a discussion see A.J. Pollard, *Imagining Robin Hood: The Late Medieval Stories in Historical Context* (London, 2004), pp. 64-71.

he seemed to find a ‘familiar world and a habitable country’.⁶⁵ In the following century, lord Dacre gave an equally condemnatory account of Durham as ‘an economic backwater, a savage and infertile country’, in which the merchants of Newcastle alone ‘in a barbarous country among illiterate and boorish squireens, constituted a single element of civilization...separating them from their elder brothers who bit their fingernails in draughty castellated farmhouses and murdered each other over the biting of a greyhound or even less important matters of dispute’.⁶⁶

Northerners were commonly portrayed as a truculent people. In the fourteenth century the English chronicler Ralph Higden, author of the *Polychronicon*, perceived a difference in character, ‘the men of the south beeth esire and more mylde; and men of the north be more unstable, more cruel, and more unesy’.⁶⁷ The impression of violent, lawless northerners gained particular momentum during the political unrest of the second half of the fifteenth century.⁶⁸ In the early sixteenth century, Polydore Vergil commented that Henry VII left for York in 1486 ‘in order to keep in obedience the folk of the north, savage and more eager than others for upheavals’.⁶⁹ William Camden, who toured Northumberland for an entry his county-by-county guide *Britannia*, regarded the local population as a race apart: ‘the very carcasses of the inhabitants appeared to have

⁶⁵ *Memoirs of a Renaissance Pope: the Commentaries of Pius II*, ed L. C. Gabel (London, 1965) pp. 34-36.

⁶⁶ Cited in Pollard, *North-Eastern England*, pp. 1-2.

⁶⁷ *Polychronicon Ranulphi Higden*, ed. C. Babington et al., 9 vols (Rolls Series, 1865-69) vol. 2, p. 167.

⁶⁸ For example, see A. King, ‘The Anglo-Scottish Marches and Perceptions of ‘the North’ in Fifteenth-Century England, *NH*, 49 (2012), 40-41.

⁶⁹ Jewell, *North-South Divide*, p. 58.

been hardened by this 'rough and barren' land. Wandering the wastes 'you would think you see the ancient nomads, a martial sort of people'.⁷⁰

English history was written from a southern perspective.⁷¹ In 1969 B.W. Beckingsale refuted historical orthodoxy that the north of England in the Elizabethan period was 'feudal, that it was Catholic (after 1558), and that it was the home of a violent and backward society...' rather, they were characteristic of all provincial England'.⁷² Yet the diversity of the north led Barrie Dobson to doubt that one could speak of the region as a whole.⁷³ Revisiting Beckingsale in the context of the fifteenth century, Tony Pollard also noted the complexities of the region and replaced the idea of a homogenous north with a sharper interpretation, consisting of the far north of the border counties and a near north below.⁷⁴ 'To describe even the near north in the fifteenth century as backward, violent, and feudal', he contended, 'does little to provide the basis of meaningful historical analysis'. What is problematic about the north in general is tricky for the furthest county in the north. Steven Ellis has argued that Northumberland was impoverished and violent but 'a distinction ...may be drawn

⁷⁰ Cited in A. Rose, *Kings in the North: The House of Percy in British History* (London, 2002), p. 11.

⁷¹ A. Briggs, 'Themes in Northern History', *NH*, 1 (1966), 1-6.

⁷² B.W. Beckingsale, 'The Characteristics of the Tudor North', *NH*, 4 (1969), 67.

⁷³ R.B. Dobson, 'Politics and the Church in the Fifteenth-Century North', in A.J. Pollard (ed.), *The North of England in the Age of Richard III* (Stroud, 1996), pp. 1-17.

⁷⁴ Pollard, in Appleby and Dalton, *Government, Religion and Society*, pp. 131-43.

between the central uplands and the narrow but superficially more ‘civil’ coastal plains further removed from the border line’.⁷⁵

A History of Northumberland, issued under the direction of the Northumberland County History Committee, lays the basis for modern study of the county.⁷⁶ However, a complete history of the county can only be obtained by reference to older works. The fifteen volumes published by the Northumberland History Committee are a continuation of John Hodgson’s *A History of Northumberland*, of which part one was compiled after his death in 1845.⁷⁷ Other studies preceded that of Hodgson. William Hutchinson’s *A View of Northumberland* was published in 1776–78 and Eneas Mckenzie’s *An Historical, Topographical and Descriptive View of the County of Northumberland*, first appeared in 1811 but *A History of Northumberland* was the first substantial work. ‘Up to Hodgson’s time’, wrote James Raine, ‘there was, strictly speaking, no History of Northumberland worthy of the name’.⁷⁸ Even then, the collection remains incomplete without the Raine’s own contribution, *A History of North Durham*.⁷⁹ And if interests lie in urban rather than rural space, the separate town

⁷⁵ S. Ellis, ‘Region and Frontier in the English State: The English Far North, 1296-1603’, in S. G. Ellis and R. Eßer with J. F. Berdah and M. Řezník (eds), *Frontiers, Regions and Identities in Europe*, (Pisa, 2009), pp. 93-94.

⁷⁶ *A History of Northumberland*, issued under the direction of the Northumberland County History Committee, 15 vols (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1893-1940). For this paragraph see J. Freeman, ‘Northumberland’, in C.R.J. Currie and C.P. Lewis (eds), *A Guide to English County Histories* (Stroud, 1997), pp. 302-11.

⁷⁷ J. Hodgson and J. Hodgson Hinde, *A History of Northumberland*, 3 pts. in 7 vols (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1820-58).

⁷⁸ Quotation cited in Freeman, in Currie and Lewis, *English County Histories*, p. 302.

⁷⁹ J. Raine, *The History and Antiquities of North Durham* (London, 1852).

histories of Alnwick and Newcastle need to be consulted.⁸⁰ These works are a useful repository of information but their age shows particularly in the lack of interpretation found in modern scholarship.

Generally, the history of the county has centred on the history of the Anglo-Scottish border and the Percy family. Richard Lomas has written on both subjects. His *County of Conflict* takes 924 as its starting point and runs to the last retreat of a Scottish army in 1647.⁸¹ Lomas therefore breaches the conventional chronological divide of 1603, when James I acceded to the English throne to unite of the crowns of England and Scotland, and is somewhat at odds with Frank Musgrove's blunt statement that in 1603 'the north became redundant'.⁸² Modern research, beginning with Anthony Tuck's essays, has tended to undermine the traditional view that the Percies dominated the county.⁸³ Recent work on the administration of law and justice has provided a more orderly picture of the county than traditionally received.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ For example, G. Tate, *The History of the Borough, Castle and Barony of Alnwick*, 2 vols (Alnwick, 1866-1888); J. Brand, *The History and Antiquities of the Town and County of Newcastle upon Tyne*, 2 vols (Newcastle, 1789); H. Bourne, *The History of Newcastle upon Tyne: or, The Ancient Present State of That Town* (Newcastle, 1736); E. Mackenzie, *A Descriptive and Historical Account of the Town and County of Newcastle including the Borough of Gateshead*, 2 vols (Newcastle, 1827). In addition, J. Scott, *Berwick-upon-Tweed: The History of the Town and Guild* (London, 1888).

⁸¹ Lomas, *County of Conflict*, p. 136.

⁸² F. Musgrove, *The North of England: A History from Roman Times to the Present* (Oxford, 1990), p. 64.

⁸³ J.A. Tuck, 'Richard II and the Border Magnates', *NH*, 3 (1968), 27-52; idem, 'The Emergence of a Northern Nobility, 1250-1400', *NH*, 22 (1986), 1-17; idem, 'The Percies and the Community of Northumberland in the Later Fourteenth Century', in A. Tuck and A. Goodman (eds), *War and Border Societies in the Middle Ages* (London, 1992), pp. 178-195; A. King, 'War, Politics and Landed Society in Northumberland, c.1296-c.1408', (unpub. Ph.D. thesis, Univ. Durham, 2001); King, 'They have the Hertes of the People by North', in Dodd and Biggs (eds), *Henry IV: The Establishment of the Regime, 1399-1406* (Woodbridge, 2003), pp. 139-59; M.A. Hicks, 'Dynastic Change and Northern Society: The Career of the Fourth

This thesis will test the implicit judgement that Northumberland was fundamentally feudal, landed society impoverished, the county inherently lawless, and, as a result of its distance from Westminster, almost impossible for the crown to administer.

III

The Sources

The mainstay of this research consists of the records of gentry families, especially deeds, and of royal government, particularly inquisitions *post mortem* (IPMs). Kinship has been seen as a key determinant of social interaction during the late medieval period that is not evident in the following centuries.⁸⁵ Parish records cannot be mined for information concerning baptisms, deaths and marriages, as the maintenance of registers did not become a legal requirement until 1538.⁸⁶ Pedigrees of armigerous gentry were compiled during the heraldic visitations that began in the early-sixteenth century; an

Earl of Northumberland', *NH*, 14 (1978), 78-107; M. Weiss, 'A Power in the North? The Percies in the Fifteenth Century', *Historical Journal*, 19 (1976), 501-9.

⁸⁴ Dobson, in Pollard, *The North of England in the Age of Richard III*, pp. 1-17; J.W. Armstrong, 'Local Conflict in the Anglo-Scottish Borderlands, c.1399-1488', (unpub. Ph.D. thesis, Univ. Cambridge, 2007); idem, 'Violence and Peacekeeping in the English Marches towards Scotland, c.1425-1440', in L. Clark (ed.), *The Fifteenth Century VI: Identity and Insurgency in the Late Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 2006), pp. 53-71; H. Summerson, 'Peacekeepers and Lawbreakers in Medieval Northumberland, c. 1200-c. 1500', in M. Prestwich (ed.), *Liberties and Identities in the Medieval British Isles* (Woodbridge, 2008), pp. 56-76; C.J. Neville, 'Keeping the Peace on the Northern Marches in the Later Middle Ages', *EHR*, 109 (1994), 1-25; eadem, *Violence, Custom and Law: The Anglo-Scottish Border Lands in the Later Middle Ages* (Edinburgh, 1998).

⁸⁵ A. MacFarlane et al., *Reconstructing Historical Communities* (Cambridge, 1977), p. 176.

⁸⁶ W.E. Tate, *The Parish Chest: A Study of Parochial Administration in England*, 3rd edn (Cambridge, 1969), p. 44.

undertaking designed to thwart the adoption of arms by those of 'vyle blood'.⁸⁷ Unfortunately, they are neither a comprehensive nor consistent point of reference. Some contributors did not trace their ancestry back to the previous century and, though many did, the accuracy and completeness of pedigrees are uneven, a reflection of the diligence of individual heralds.⁸⁸

Whilst the haphazard and fragmentary nature of the sources relating to gentry families is a common obstacle, the scale of loss in Northumberland is acute. The Swinburne estate papers, exploited by Cynthia Neville, form the most comprehensive private papers held at the local archives, the residue are relatively thin.⁸⁹ Very few marriage settlements, manorial accounts and wills associated with residents have survived the passage of time to allow a detailed analysis of the acquisition of and dispersal of land, estate management and bequests. The extant records are predominantly made up of property deeds. Written in a legal context, they essentially note the parties involved, the particular transaction, those who verified proceedings and give little else away. The sources are not only restricted in terms of scope but also chronology and content. Most deeds relate to gentry families principally based in southern Northumberland, below the river Coquet. This bias impinges on the investigation of interpersonal ties, which are therefore observed from a narrower perspective than the county as a whole. In addition, the first half of the century is much better represented than the remainder.

⁸⁷ Quotation cited in P.R. Coss, 'Heraldry and Monumental Effigies in the North East', in T.E. Faulkner (ed.), *Northumbrian Panorama: Studies in the History and Culture of North East England* (London, 1996), p. 4.

⁸⁸ A.R. Wagner, *The Records and Collections of the College of Arms* (London, 1952), pp. 16-17.

⁸⁹ Neville, *Violence, Custom and Law*.

The identification of individuals also presented some practical issues. Variant spellings are common as orthography was not fixed and the number of cadet lines in residence within the county muddies the waters as more than one person could bear the same name concurrently. In these instances, where possible, a judgement has been made on what is already known about a person's particular company or locality. Further limitations of this type of material in terms of reconstructing relationships is discussed within the text.

A range of public records have been employed that mark out individuals, illustrate the dynamic between locality and centre and touch on Anglo-Scottish relations. This collection is drawn from the *Rolls* series, constitutional and historical documents, records of the exchequer, chancery, courts of law and material relating to Scotland. Less conventionally, this study makes specific use of the modern calendared series of inquisitions *post mortem* (IPMs) as a medium to examine social and political interaction.⁹⁰ IPMs resulted from the inquiries of a sworn jury following the death of a landholder believed to be a feudal tenant of the crown. This class of record also includes related material: extents of property; proof of age of a minor to succeed as a tenant-in-chief, assignments of dower, partition of estates between co-heirs and writs that instigated the various processes.

⁹⁰ For what follows on this subject see M. Hicks (ed.), *The Fifteenth-Century Inquisitions Post Mortem: A Companion* (Woodbridge, 2012); C. Carpenter, 'General Introduction to the New Series', *CIPM*, 1422-27, pp. 1-42.

The importance of IPMs lies in the level and range of information assembled, their survival in large number and relevance to the writing of local and national history. From their initial use by antiquarians to compile genealogies of the local gentry, IPMs are now used broadly for historical analysis as they lend themselves to comparison. The procedure was in continual use from the mid-thirteenth to the mid-sixteenth century and operated throughout England, though the palatinate counties of Durham, Chester and Lancaster maintained their own records. In addition, as the questions posed to juries followed a common form the documents provide a consistent textual framework. Modern research has exploited IPMs to consider wider questions concerning English economic, social and political history. The reliability of IPMs, however, is a thorny subject. In regard to the fifteenth century, the discussion centres on property valuations that were of particular importance for the crown since they were the basis for the sale of wardships.

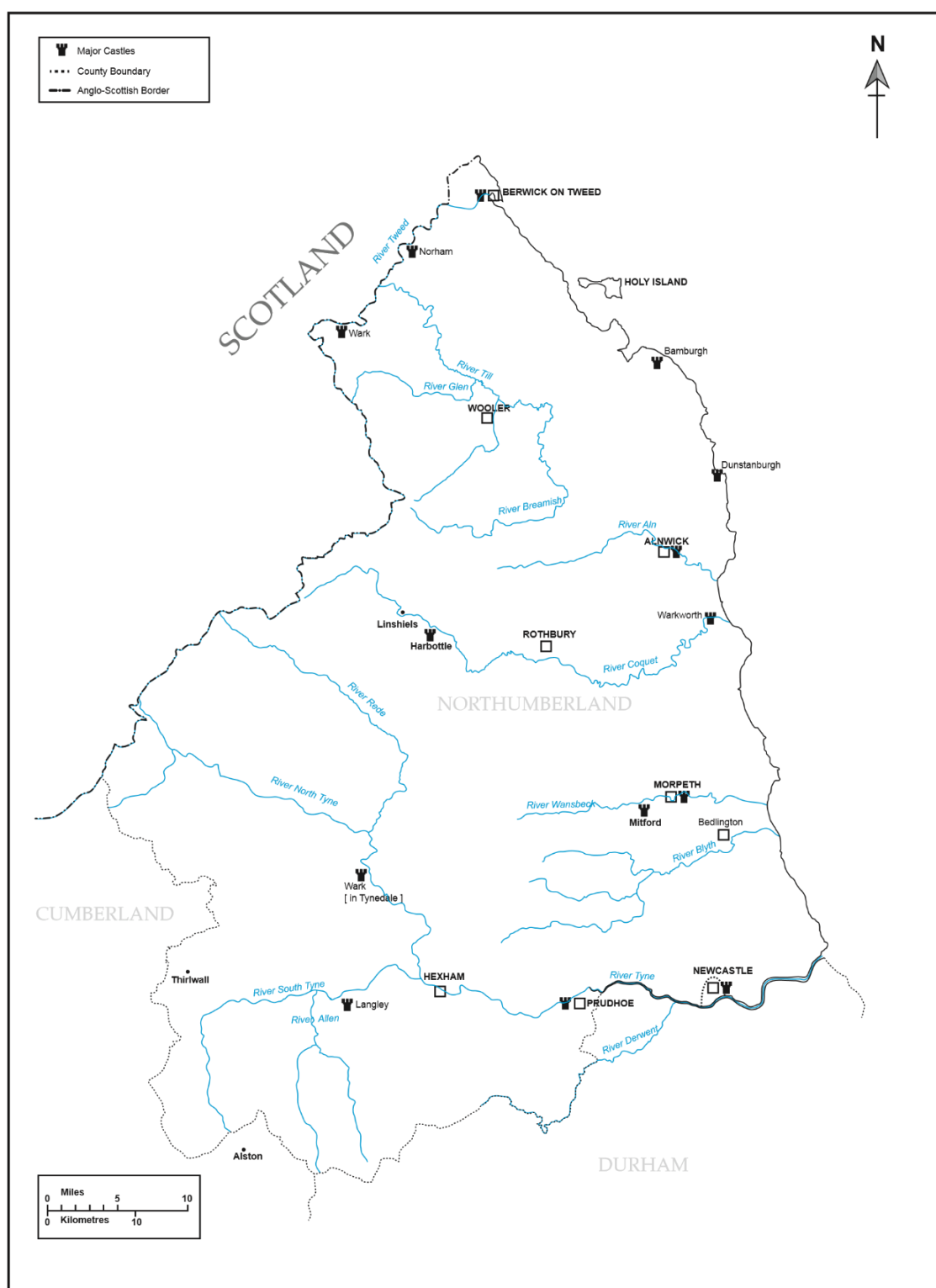
The modern calendar series, however, is incomplete and has an inconsistent format. A gap exists between 1447-85 and the content of calendars covering the years 1399-1447, which were produced in two distinct phases, reflect different editorial priorities. The earliest part of the series from 1399-1422 made the source material much more accessible than its predecessor. This series translates key information from the original records such as the date of writ and the death of tenant, a description of land (extent), the names and genealogical relationship of the heir and tenants of knights' fees, but further information that was deemed extraneous is omitted. The new series of calendars from 1422-47 goes much further to meet current interests in scholarship. No stone has been left unturned: information relating to the administrative process, officers, juries and details of the findings are meticulously recorded. Consequently, some questions

can only be investigated within a particular timeframe because of the limited parameters of the earlier series.

This study is set in the administrative county of Northumberland as it stood during the first half of the fifteenth century: bounded to the north by Scotland; to the south by the palatinate of Durham; to the west by Cumberland, and to the east by the North Sea (Map 1). Although geographically within the boundaries of the administrative county, the various liberties that lay beyond the jurisdiction of the sheriff of Northumberland are largely excluded. Such an exception leaves this study open to the criticism directed at county studies in ‘taking little account of the sum of local jurisdictions, or consistent with county jurisdictions.’⁹¹ On the other hand, as Matthew Holford and Keith Stringer have demonstrated, the history of the liberties merits independent investigation.⁹² Newcastle and Berwick-upon-Tweed are also omitted. Newcastle achieved county status in its own right in 1400, though the royal castle remained part of the county of Northumberland. Berwick-upon-Tweed technically belonged to Scotland but was in English hands until ceded to the Scots by Margaret of Anjou in 1461.

⁹¹ Holford and Stringer, *Border Liberties and Loyalties*, p. 7.

⁹² Ibid.



Map 1. The County of Northumberland

1

Feudal Tenure

Was Northumberland different in its social structure from other counties, including being ‘more feudal’? Modern research has tended to undermine the traditional view that the Percies dominated county society, not least by the virtue of being the principal landowners. Anthony Tuck, for example, has demonstrated that the first earl of Northumberland (d. 1408) had to compete for the gentry’s following.¹

English feudalism was founded on the principle of ‘no land without a lord’.² A retrospective term and contentious construct, feudalism broadly describes the system of landholding, administration and relations between lord and vassal in England following the Norman Conquest.³ Landholding rested on obligations of service to a superior lord. The king was paramount lord since he alone owned land, his subjects held by tenancy. Tenants-in-chief held an estate in land (a fief or fee) directly from the crown, originally in return for military service.⁴ Whilst some land remained in hand by tenants-in-chief,

¹ Tuck, in Tuck and Goodman, *War and Border Societies*, pp. 178-95.

² D. Hay, *The Medieval Centuries* (London, 1964), p. 40.

³ For example, see M. Bloch, *Feudal Society*, trans. L.A. Manyon, 2 vols (Chicago, 1961); F. Ganshof, *Feudalism*, trans. P. Grierson (New York, 1964); E.R. Brown, ‘The Tyranny of a Construct: Feudalism and Historians of Medieval Europe’, *American Historical Review*, 79 (1974), 1063-88; S. Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals: The Medieval Evidence Reinterpreted* (Oxford, 1994); M. Chibnall, ‘Feudalism and Lordship’ in C. Harper-Bill and E. van Houts (eds), *A Companion to the Anglo-Norman World* (Woodbridge, 2002), pp. 123-34.

⁴ Theoretically, an award of land in return for military service was based on the supply of a fully-armed knight in the king’s army for forty days at his own cost, see F. Pollock and F. W.

most had been subinfeudated, granted to mesne (intermediate) lords, who consequently became their vassals.⁵

Feudal tenure, the particular terms on which land was held, was divided into two types: free and unfree. Free tenure was governed by common law, which gave tenants the right to sue their lord in the royal courts, and took four forms: frankalmoign (or free alms), knight service, serjeanty and socage.⁶ Frankalmoign related to land held in return for prayers and was typically the tenure of religious houses. Knight service, generally associated with lay lords, entailed performing military duties but by the middle of the 12th century the duty was usually discharged by scutage, a payment in lieu. Serjeanty encompassed an assortment of obligations relating to particular duties due to the king, or another lord, outside of the scope of direct military service or socage. Many serjeanties had been commuted for rent by the thirteenth century but some were still reported in the fifteenth century. Socage, the tenure of the bulk of minor freeholders, was returned for fixed rents that could involve agricultural work. Virtually landless free tenants might exist within these categories and tenants could hold property of a number of lords by a variety of tenures.

Maitland, *The History of English Law Before the Time of Edward I*, ed. S.F.C. Milsom, 2 vols, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 1968), vol. 1, 252.

⁵ For subinfeudation see J.M.W. Bean, *The Decline of English Feudalism, 1215-1540* (Manchester, 1968), *passim*.

⁶ The content of remainder of this paragraph is derived from Pollock and Maitland, *English Law*, vol. 1, 240-96, 355.

Land was the foundation of social and political power.⁷ The manor formed the basic unit of resource for which service was exchanged. A lord's demesne (domain), the land he occupied, comprised the land under his immediate control, whose produce supported his household, and tenanted land from which he obtained rent services to maintain the demesne. The manorial system gave lords jurisdiction over their demesne and the tenantry. Theoretically, there were two types of manorial court: the court customary for unfree tenants, such as villeins or copyholders, whose tenure was held at the will of the lord, and the court baron for freehold tenants, although in practice one court seems to have served both functions.⁸ In the manorial court a lord exercised his seigneurial rights to servile dues, regulated petty offences and introduced by-laws.⁹ In the courts baron he preserved his entitlement to reliefs, wardships and marriages resulting from free tenure and maintained public order by hearing civil pleas involving sums of up to 40s.

An assessment of the distribution of land is usually achieved through a manorial count, though the method is not without its failings.¹⁰ The *Victoria County History* (VCH) series is the ideal medium for enumerating and grouping manorial property as it conveniently lists all the manors within a parish but Northumberland is the only county not covered by the series or where work is in progress. Consequently, this information would have to be extracted from more than twenty assorted and substantial volumes detailing the history of the county, a protracted exercise for a sole researcher and one

⁷ For example, Pollard, *North-Eastern England*, p. 81.

⁸ A.L. Brown, *The Governance of Late Medieval England, 1272-1461* (London, 1989), p. 112.

⁹ M. Bailey, *The English Manor c.1200-1500* (Manchester, 2002), p. 169.

¹⁰ See Pollard, *North-Eastern England*, pp. 81-84.

complicated by the fact that the boundaries of parish, township and manor differed across the country.¹¹

The size of a parish was normally determined by the number of parishioners needed to support a church and priest through the payment of tithes and other dues. In general parishes in southern England tended to be small and consist of a single township, whereas in the north parishes were larger and likely to encompass several townships.¹² Further difficulties arise thereafter since ‘a northern English manor could constitute a fraction of a township, be coterminous with a township, or be made up of a group of townships’.¹³ Indeed, if neighbouring Durham is a reliable guide, in some parts of the county the conventional notion of a manor as a high-status dwelling and a jurisdictional unit might be hard to find.¹⁴ An alternative strategy is to approach the problem from the opposite direction and establish the distribution of land from the division of knights’ fees rather than the manor as a means of resource.

The subject of knights’ fees is pertinent to contemporary discussions of fifteenth-century feudalism, although historians once considered the matter obsolescent since

¹¹ A.J.L. Winchester, *Discovering Parish Boundaries* (Princes Risborough, 1990), p. 6.

¹² Ibid., pp. 6-8. Most parishes in Northumberland were large, consisting of ten or more townships, and many villages were without a church, Lomas, *County of Conflict*, pp. 108-10.

¹³ D.J.H. Michelmore, ‘The Reconstruction of the Early Tenorial and Territorial Divisions of the Landscape of Northern England’, *Landscape History*, 1 (1979), 8.

¹⁴ C.D. Liddy, *The Bishopric of Durham in the Late Middle Ages: Lordship, Community and the Cult of St Cuthbert* (Woodbridge, 2008), p. 47. For the difficulty in finding a standard definition see Bailey, *English Manor*, pp. 2-5.

Edward III engaged contract armies and ended military recruitment by feudal means.¹⁵ In 1940 Helen Cam recorded the demise of feudal institutions.¹⁶ Five years later, McFarlane wrote that 'feudalism still existed formally intact, but was becoming for all practical purposes a complex network of marketable privileges and duties attached to the ownership of land with little or no importance as a social force'.¹⁷

In 1995 Michael Hicks highlighted that Mervyn James 'attaches weight to baronial courts and knights' fees that McFarlane and the whole McFarlane school of historians have hitherto ignored'.¹⁸ James studied the great northern estates of Percy, Clifford and Dacre, and found that 'the many mesne tenures by knight service which survived ... meant that ties of patronage were reinforced by those of feudal service based on the exaction of homage, with knights' courts such as those at Alnwick and Skipton ... helped to express and sustain the solidarity of clientele'.¹⁹ Moreover, feudal tenants with long-established bonds to aristocratic families were 'predisposed to enter their service, accept their leadership, and turned naturally to them for office and advancement'.²⁰ Recent studies of late feudalism during the fifteenth century have echoed James. The administration and exaction of symbolic feudal dues were still

¹⁵ For later military obligations see M. Keen, 'Richard II's Ordinances of War of 1385', in R.E. Archer and S. Walker (eds), *Rulers and Ruled in Late Medieval England* (London, 1995), pp. 33-34, fn.3.

¹⁶ H. Cam, 'The Decline and Fall of English Feudalism', *History*, 25 (1940), 216-33.

¹⁷ McFarlane, *England in the Fifteenth Century*, p. 24.

¹⁸ Hicks, *Bastard Feudalism*, p. 41.

¹⁹ James, *Society, Politics and Culture*, pp. 2, 68-69. For the careful keeping of record see *Percy Bailiff's Rolls of the Fifteenth Century*, ed. J. C. Hodgson, SS, 134 (1921).

²⁰ Hicks, *Bastard Feudalism*, pp. 11, 36.

significant as a focus of identity, social cohesion and, when combined with continuous and effective lordship, political unity.²¹

In March 1428 parliament granted a new form of subsidy on parishes and knights' fees, one of several direct subsidies levied on individuals introduced during the fifteenth century for the defence of the realm, that operated alongside the ordinary form of taxation based on the communal fixed quotas of one-fifteenth in the country and one-tenth in towns.²² Assessments were conducted by commissioners supported by jurors, who formed an integral part of royal government. Tenants of freehold land were taxed at the rate of 6s. 8d. per knight's fee with liability set at a quarter of a fee, though the church's titheable possessions were exempt.²³ Notionally, a knight's fee was equivalent to an annual income of £20 from land.²⁴ The approach has a major deficiency as the source material is too selective to generate a representative profile of landed society. It particularly neglects the holdings of the church and liberties that were generally exempt from taxation. On the other hand, in the absence of research on the division of manorial

²¹ For example, M. Devine, 'The Lordship of Richmond in the Later Middle Ages', in M. Prestwich (ed.), *Liberties and Identities in the Medieval British Isles* (Woodbridge, 2005), pp. 98-110; S. Rose, 'A Twelfth-Century Honour in a Fifteenth-Century World: The Honour of Pontefract', in L. Clark (ed.), *The Fifteenth Century IX: English and Continental Perspectives* (Woodbridge, 2010), pp. 38-58.

²² A. Curry (ed.), 'Henry VI: Parliament of October 1427, Text and Translation', in *PROME*, ed. C. Given-Wilson et al., (Leicester, 2005), item 13; *ibid.*, 'Introduction', preparations for an expeditionary force to France, led by the earl of Salisbury, were underway long before this date. An earlier attempt at direct taxation during the previous century, the poll tax of 1380, was abandoned following the Peasants' Revolt in 1381, see M. Jurkowski, C.L. Smith and D. Crook, *Lay Taxes in England and Wales, 1188-1688*, PRO Handbook 31 (Kew, 1998), pp. xxxvi-xxxvii. For more on fractional taxation of a fifteenth and tenth, see *ibid.*, pp. xxvi-xxxiv.

²³ A. Curry (ed.), 'Henry VI: Parliament of October 1427, Text and Translation', in *PROME*, item 13.

²⁴ J.H. Round, 'The Introduction of Knight Service into England', *EHR*, 7 (1892), 12.

holdings and given that the documentation concerning knights' fees has not been studied in detail, even a partial analysis would seem to be a step forward.²⁵

The earliest tenants-in-chief were awarded large estates of a barony (or honour). As the highest unit of lordship, a barony conferred dignity and status on the holder. Twenty-one baronies had been established in the county by 1135, of which nine barons shortly after their creation built a castle in its name to serve as its administrative headquarters.²⁶ Fewer than 70 knights' fees were due to the crown from all the baronies in the county at this time.²⁷ By way of comparison, the lordship of Richmond, in Yorkshire, owed 62.²⁸ Of the Northumbrian baronies with a castle as its *caput*, Alnwick, the largest, had an obligation of 12 knights' fees to Prudhoe, which owed 2½ fees but was usually rated at 2, in line with Warkworth and Wark.²⁹ The barony of Beanley was an exception to the rule as it was not held by knight service but in serjeanty. Originally created by Henry I for Gospatrick, earl of Dunbar, the tenancy required the particular duty of 'inborwe and utborwe', surety for the peaceful and honest intentions of people going between England and Scotland.³⁰ Serjeanties that

²⁵ A brief analysis of the material can be found in S.G. Ellis, 'Civilizing Northumberland: Representations of Englishness in the Tudor State', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 12 (1999), 137.

²⁶ W.P. Hedley, *Northumbrian Families*, 2 vols (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1968-70), vol. 1, 21; Lomas, *County of Conflict*, pp. 16, 19. However, the information provided in relation to the baronies of Warkworth and Bolam appears to be inconsistent.

²⁷ 67½ fees were owed, Lomas, *County of Conflict*, p. 18.

²⁸ Devine, in Prestwich, *Liberties and Identities*, p. 103.

²⁹ Lomas, *County of Conflict*, p. 16.

³⁰ Hedley, *Northumbrian Families*, vol. 1, 21, 236.

encompassed lesser duties had been exchanged for knights' fees or commuted for rent.³¹

A fee-holder's influence was enhanced by mesne lordship. Although by no means the majority, a number of tenants continued to perform feudal obligations exclusively or combined with rents.³² Most relationships between lord and man retained a contemporary significance in the payment of fines for suit of court, castle-guard and fixed rents. Some rents were paid in cash and some in kind through the render of various items such as roses, gloves, spurs, hawks, and spices.³³ Ralph Eure, for example, held the manors of Kirkhaugh, Darras Hall and the townships of Berwick Hall, High or Little Callerton and others of the barony of Mitford by the common rent of a barbed arrow in midsummer.³⁴ His son, William, held the same properties by the rather unusual delivery of a catapult.³⁵

Holders of the five franchises, or liberties (Map 2), exercised additional legal privileges from their neighbours.³⁶ Redesdale (Map 2.1) and Tynedale (Map 2.2), were in lay hands. Redesdale was granted in return for guarding the valley from wolves and

³¹ For example, *NCH*, vol. 1, 24-25, 153 fn.1; *CIPM*, 1405-13, p. 1. For the latter reference also see R.F. Hunnisett, 'The Origins of the Office of Coroner', in D.A. Bullough and R.L. Storey (eds), *The Study of Medieval Records* (Oxford, 1971), pp. 99-100.

³² For examples of tenants who still performed suit of court or suit of mill and instances where services were combined with a monetary rent see, *CIPM*, 1399-1405, p. 246; 1405-13, p. 262; *ibid.*; 1413-18, pp. 50, 137; *ibid.*, 1418-22, p. 286; *ibid.*, 1427-32, p. 197; *ibid.*, 1432-37, p. 480.

³³ Lomas, *County of Conflict*, p. 19.

³⁴ *CIPM*, 1418-22, p. 350.

³⁵ *FA*, vol. 4, 80. For the same rent exacted from a tenant in Nottingham see *CFR*, 1405-13, pp. 45-46.

³⁶ Cf. Lomas, *County of Conflict*, p. 158, who considers Newcastle as a liberty.

thieves.³⁷ It was held by the Umfraville family until 1437, who were succeeded by Tailboys of Kyme in Lincolnshire. Tynedale has a more complicated history.³⁸ At the beginning of the century it was a possession of the dukes of York. By dower, enfeoffment (grant of legal title) and award, it remained with members of the family until 1484. The property was incorporated into crown lands following the accession of Richard, duke of York in 1461.

The other three liberties were in ecclesiastical control: Hexhamshire was held by the archbishop of York (Map 2.3); Tynemouth by the prior of Tynemouth (Map 2.4) and North Durham, comprising Islandshire, Norhamshire and Bedlingtonshire, by the bishop of Durham (Map 2.5).³⁹ The liberties had common features in being semi-autonomous, in that they were held at the king's will, and having return of writ, the right to execute royal mandates within the liberty. This meant that the king's officers and justices were prohibited from acting within its boundaries and that the holder made his own appointments in their place. Overall, the king's writ did not run in around half

³⁷ *CIPM*, 1432-37, p. 484.

³⁸ The descent of Tynedale is given in *CIPM*, 1432-37, pp. 192-93. Joan, widow of Edmund, duke of York, held a third of Redesdale in dower. In 1412 two-thirds were enfeoffed via trustees to Thomas Grey and his wife Isabel. Following Grey's death (bef. 1426) the estate was retained by Isabel and her subsequent husbands in her right until 1474. Following death of Joan, widow of Edmund duke of York, in 1434 her third reverted to Isabel and her then husband, Henry Bouchier, count of Eu in Normandy, *CCR*, 1435-41, pp. 6-7. Edward IV granted Redesdale to the couple and their heirs in 1474, *CPR*, 1467-77, p. 451. However, it was recovered by the crown following Isabel's death in 1484, L. Clark, 'Bouchier, Henry, first earl of Essex (c.1408-1483)', *ODNB*, vol. 6, 815. Geographically, the liberty of Tynedale straddled the counties of Northumberland and Cumberland. Alston was annexed to Cumberland in the early twelfth century, see A.J.L. Winchester, *The Harvest of the Hills: Rural Life in Northern England and the Scottish Borders, 1400-1700* (Edinburgh, 2000), p.160.

³⁹ Although Bedlingtonshire was part of North Durham, it was administered separately, Lomas, *County of Conflict*, p. 152.

of modern day Northumberland.⁴⁰ Most liberty holders had pleas of the crown, which removed cases from the jurisdiction of king's bench and court of common pleas, but beyond that particular right legal privileges varied.⁴¹

The holder of Redesdale, for example, had view of frankpledge, the authority to deal with petty crime in the king's name, assize of bread and ale and infangen-theof, permission to pursue and hang a thief, amongst others.⁴² Hexham and Tynemouth were entitled to the profits of justice from the estate rather than being delivered to the king.⁴³ Durham, the largest and most complete liberty in England, had such extensive rights that it maintained its own administration: coroners, justices of the peace, local courts, central court, justices at law (who dispensed the king's law) and an exchequer.⁴⁴ Furthermore, the bishop had regalian powers in the prerogative of the wardship of marriage of any minor whose property was held by knight service and to seize forfeited estates.⁴⁵ However, according to *Quo Warranto* proceedings of 1297, Durham was technically a liberty within Northumberland.⁴⁶

⁴⁰ Holford and Stringer, *Border Liberties and Loyalties*, p. 14.

⁴¹ Local pleas were therefore outside the jurisdiction of king's bench or the court of common pleas.

⁴² *CIPM*, 1432-37, p. 484.

⁴³ R. Lomas, *North-East England in the Middle Ages* (Edinburgh, 1992), pp. 84-85.

⁴⁴ Brown, *Governance*, p. 13.

⁴⁵ Lomas, *North-East England in the Middle Ages*, p. 78.

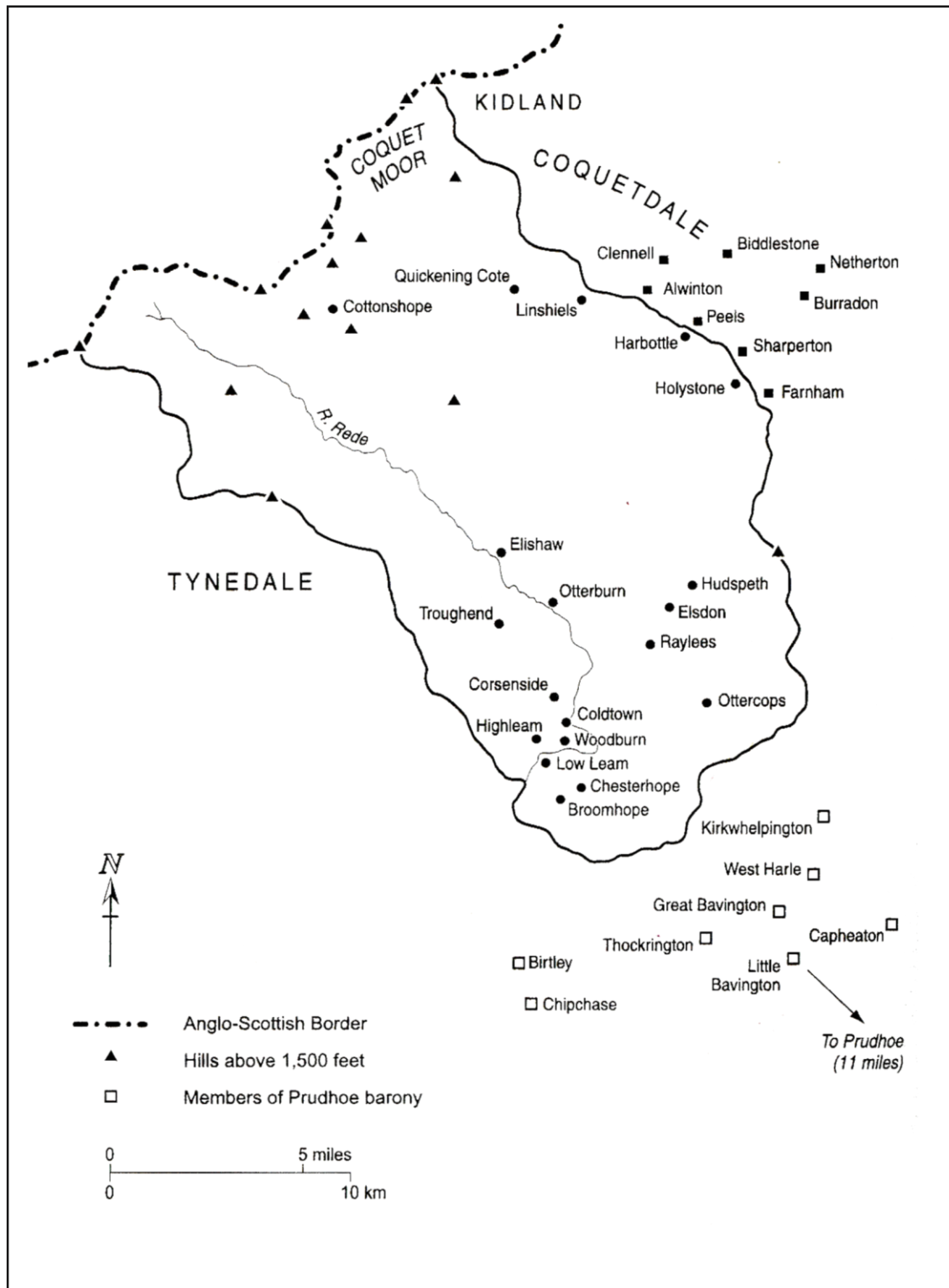
⁴⁶ Pollard, *North-Eastern England*, p. 145. For the political implications see idem, 'Provincial Politics in Lancastrian England: The Challenge to Bishop Langley's Liberty in 1433', in K. Dockray and P. Fleming (eds), *People, Places and Perspectives* (Stroud, 2005), 69-78; cf. Liddy, *Bishopric of Durham*, pp. 208-27.



Map 2. The Greater Liberties of North-East England

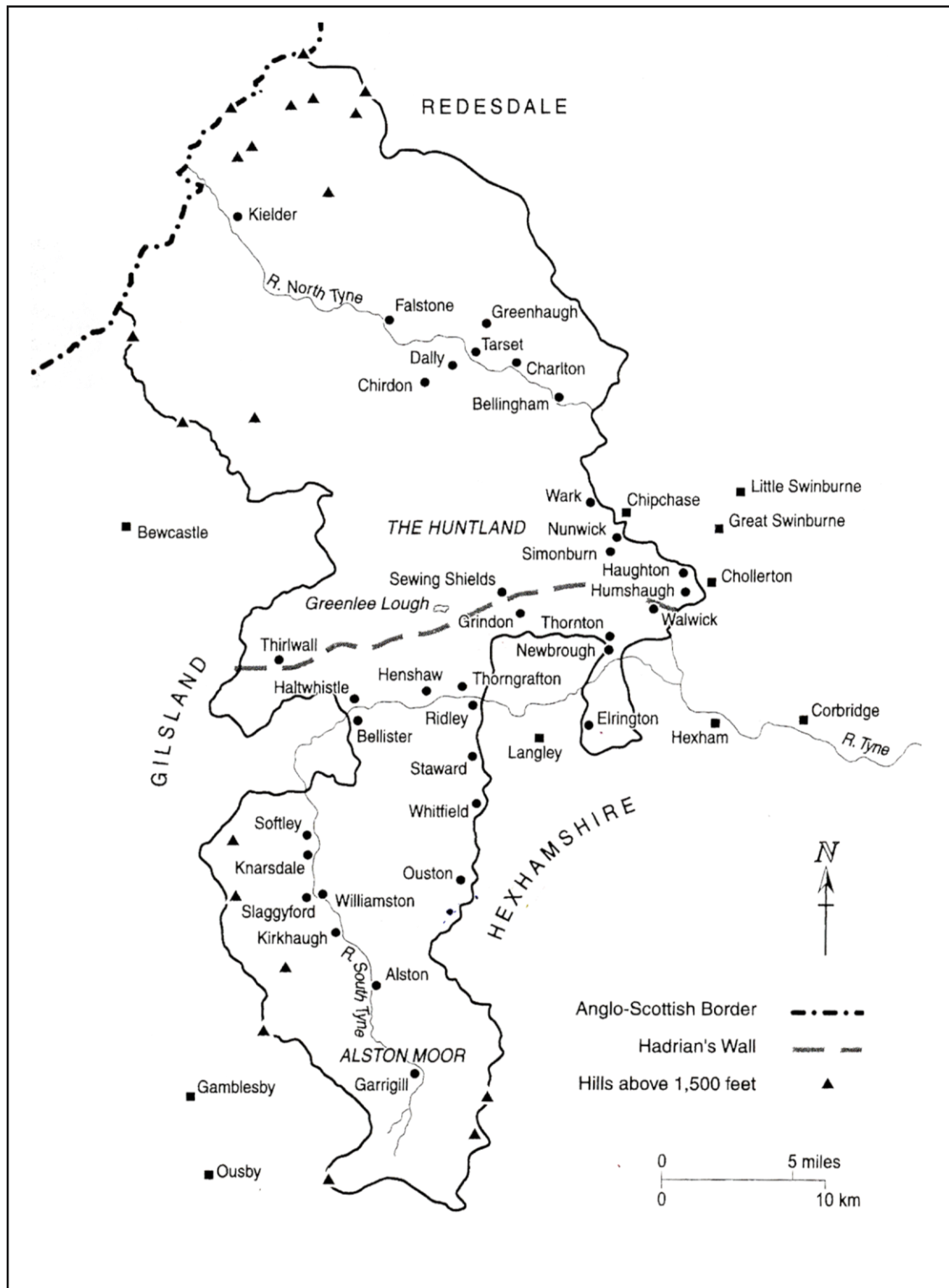
From M.L. Holford and K.J. Stringer, *Border Liberties and Loyalties: North-East England, c.1200-c.1400* (Edinburgh, 2010).

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Map 2.1. The Liberty of Redesdale

From Holford and Stringer, *Border Liberties and Loyalties*.
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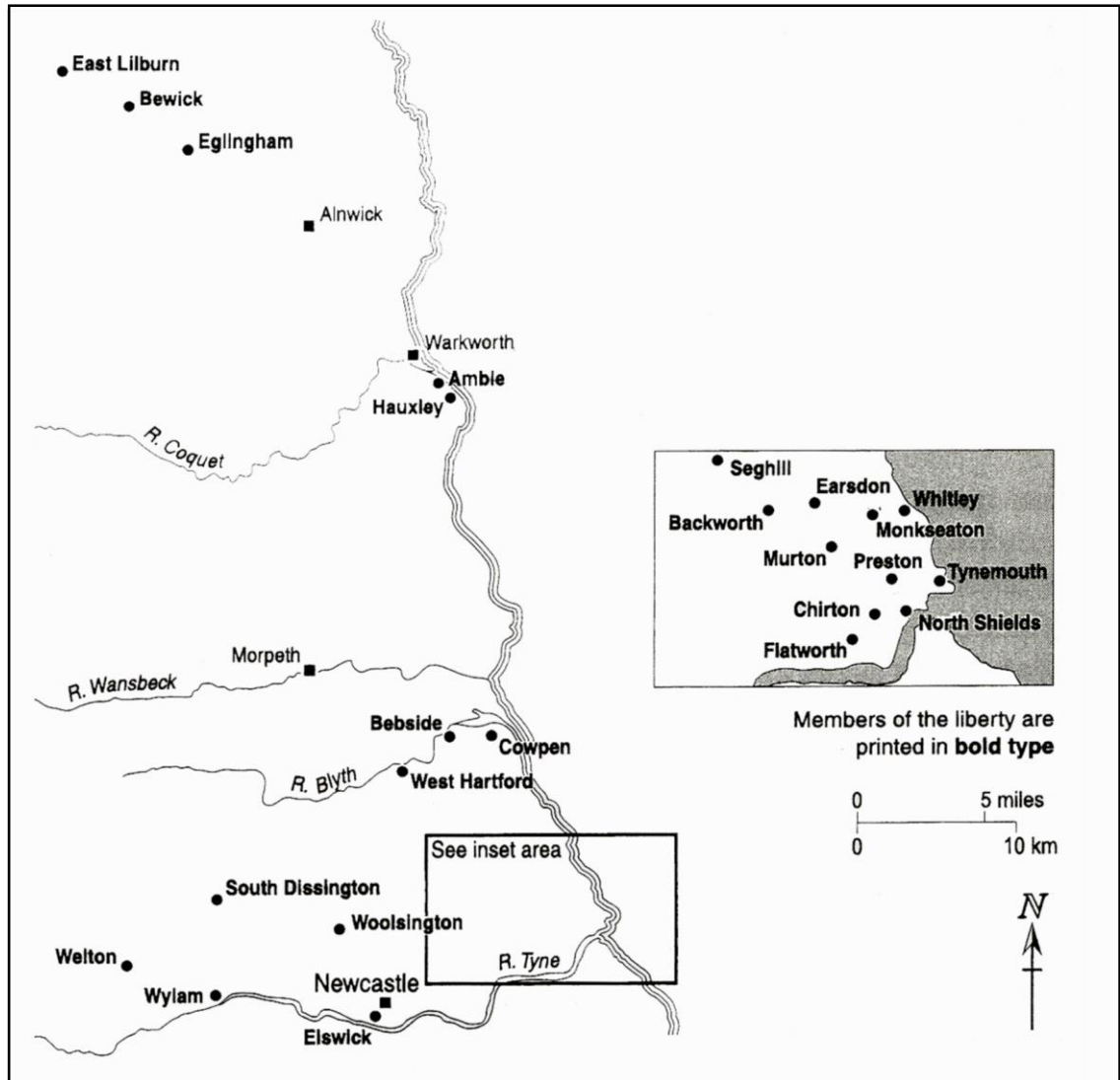
Map 2.2. The Liberty of Tynedale

From Holford and Stringer, *Border Liberties and Loyalties*.
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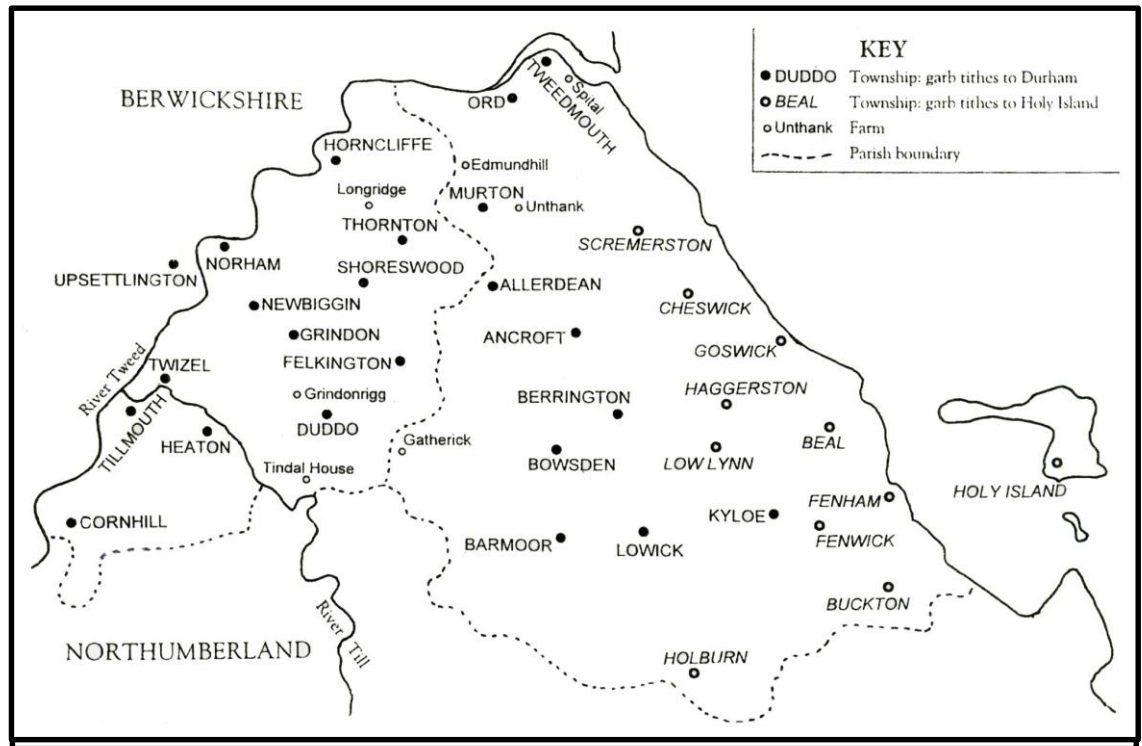
Map 2.3. The Liberty of Hexhamshire

From Holford and Stringer, *Border Liberties and Loyalties*.
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Map 2.4. The Liberty of Tynemouthshire

From Holford and Stringer, *Border Liberties and Loyalties*.
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Map 2.5. The Liberty of Durham: North Durham, the Parishes of Norhamshire and Islandshire

From R. Lomas, 'The Impact of Border Warfare: The Scots and South Tweedside, c. 1290-c. 1520', *SHR*, 75 (1996).

The endowment of feudal rights also enabled the holder to live a privileged lifestyle. Hunting provided training for war and embodied the chivalric values of bravery, prowess, honesty and gallantry.⁴⁷ The crown pursued large game within royal forests, the greater nobility in their private forests, known as chases, and enclosed parks. Lesser landholders hunted too, aping the military and social ethos of their superiors. Rights to hunt were closely protected. A royal licence of free warren was needed to keep and breed smaller game animals within a defined geographic area where hunting was prohibited by others. By a statute of 1390 anyone with an income of less than 40s. p.a. from land or rents caught hunting ‘gentlemen’s game’ faced a year’s imprisonment.⁴⁸

There was no royal forest in Northumberland at this time. In the middle of the fourteenth century the county had been ‘disafforested’, released as a sole preserve of the crown and thus from the enforcement of forest law.⁴⁹ The earls of Northumberland did not have a chase in the county but maintained one in Yorkshire.⁵⁰ Despite the war, forests and at least some deer remained. A few grants make mention of forests in Rothbury, Prudhoe and a forester court was held in Redesdale.⁵¹ James Buck, a juror at a local inquisition in 1412, recalled ‘hunting in the forest and a stag running at him,

⁴⁷ N. Orme, ‘Education and Recreation’, in R. Radelescu and A. Truelove (eds), *Gentry Culture in Late Medieval England* (Manchester, 2005), p. 77-78; N. Saul, *Chivalry in Medieval England* (Harvard, 2011), p. 12.

⁴⁸ P. Maddern, ‘Gentility’, in R. Radelescu and A. Truelove (eds), *Gentry Culture in Late Medieval England* (Manchester, 2005), p. 30.

⁴⁹ W.P. Hedley, ‘The Mediæval Forests of Northumberland’, *AA4*, 28 (1950), 97.

⁵⁰ Pollard, *North-Eastern England*, p. 204.

⁵¹ J.M.W. Bean, *The Estates of the Percy Family 1416-1437* (Oxford, 1958), p. 92; *CCR*, 1435-41, pp. 206-7; *CIPM*, 1432-37, p. 484.

[which] struck him to the ground and broke his left arm'.⁵² The pursuit of lesser game is better recorded. Sir Robert Ogle received a licence of warreny for his demesnes at Hepple.⁵³ Nicholas Turpin, returning home from the baptism of William Carnaby, was surprised to find huntsmen in chase of a fox from his own wood.⁵⁴ Others hunted hare with the help of a keen-eyed and swift greyhound.⁵⁵ Such activities continued to be a major pre-occupation of Tudor gentlemen. In the 1540s, during a time of war, the Northumbrian gentry were castigated for being 'lieth at home, hawking, hunting and going to weddings ... to the evil example of others in this most chieftest time'.⁵⁶

In 1428 the assessment of knights' fees was principally conducted through six wards, administrative subdivisions of the county (Map 3).⁵⁷ The process also reached into some liberties but not all because of their particular rights. As in the past, the Redesdale and Tynemouth were integrated into the county return. Redesdale was incorporated within Tynedale ward whereas Tynemouth continued to be treated as a discrete entity.⁵⁸ Assessments were not undertaken in the liberties of Durham, Hexhamshire or Tynedale, which were generally exempt from taxation.

⁵² *CIPM*, 1405-13, p. 364.

⁵³ Roskell et al., *HOC*, vol. 3, 862.

⁵⁴ 'Proofs of Age of Heirs to Estates in Northumberland in the Reigns of Henry IV, Henry V and Henry VI', ed. J. C. Hodgson, *AA2*, 22 (1900). 120-21; *CIPM*, 1405-13, p. 364.

⁵⁵ *CIPM*, 1405-13, p. 364.

⁵⁶ Quotation cited in L.W. Hepple, *A History of Northumberland and Newcastle Upon Tyne* (London, 1976), p. 66.

⁵⁷ Lomas, *County of Conflict*, pp. 147-48. The ward boundaries indicated on the map are suggestive, based on the collection of knights' fees. Assessments were conducted in eight wards previously, *The Northumberland Lay Subsidy Roll of 1296*, ed. C.M. Fraser (Newcastle, 1968), p. xiii.

⁵⁸ Holford and Stringer, *Border Liberties and Loyalties*, pp. 210-11, 371-72.

Commissioners went beyond their remit and accounted for knights' fees below the threshold of taxation, which have been included in the following analysis.⁵⁹ The distribution of knights' fees (Table 1) is shown against three categories of feeholder: the crown, nobility and gentry. The nobility comprised dukes, marquises, earls, viscounts and lords. An earl required a minimum income of 1000 marks yearly to maintain his dignity.⁶⁰ 'Gentry' is the umbrella term for the three ranks of lesser landowner: knights, esquires and gentlemen. In theory, the ranks were separated by wealth. Knightly status demanded a minimum income of £40 p.a. from land, and esquires £20 p.a. The term 'gentleman' acquired a specific meaning in the early part of the fifteenth century. The Statute of Additions of 1413 required that defendants in indictments that might lead to outlawry were not only identified by their name and locality, but also by their 'estate, degree or mystery (craft)'.⁶¹ Aliases were given to include all known past legal transactions. Hence, in relation to a plea of debt, William Harding was variously described as 'of Newcastle, 'gentilman', alias of the county of Northumberland, esquire, or of Chilburne [Chibburn], co. Northumberland, 'gentilman'.⁶² According to the Garter King of Arms in 1530, an income of £10 p.a. was the minimum requirement for a gentleman, a threshold that could also embrace the

⁵⁹ FA, vol. 4, 77-90.

⁶⁰ M. Hicks, *Richard III and His Rivals: Magnates and their Motives in the Wars of the Roses* (London, 1991), p. 213. Cf. C. Given-Wilson, *The English Nobility in the Late Middle Ages: The Fourteenth Century Political Community* (London, 1987), p. 66, which states a figure of £1000.

⁶¹ Maddern, in Radelescu and Truelove, *Gentry Culture in Late Medieval England*, p. 23. The author also notes that by the turn of the decade many plaintiffs also gave their designation if they were of gentle or clerical status, doubtless with the intention of adding weight to their case.

⁶² CPR, 1429-36, p. 238.

upper yeomanry.⁶³ Although separated in terms of status, the nobility and gentry had a common interest in being able to draw a sufficient income from land to largely allow them to spend their days at leisure.⁶⁴

As a landholder, the crown had little interest in the county. Royal possessions were limited to the castles at Bamburgh and the liberty of Embleton (Dunstanburgh), a private inheritance of the duchy of Lancaster.⁶⁵ In this analysis, knights' fees owed to the crown in both a public and private capacity have been combined. The total number of fees in each ward have been rounded down to the nearest quarter for convenience.⁶⁶ A small proportion of fees due to religious houses, the abbey of Newminster and the priory at Tynemouth, have been excluded.⁶⁷

⁶³ Pollard, *North-Eastern England*, p. 86.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ R. Somerville, *The History of the Duchy of Lancaster, 1265-1603*, 2 vols (London, 1953-1970).

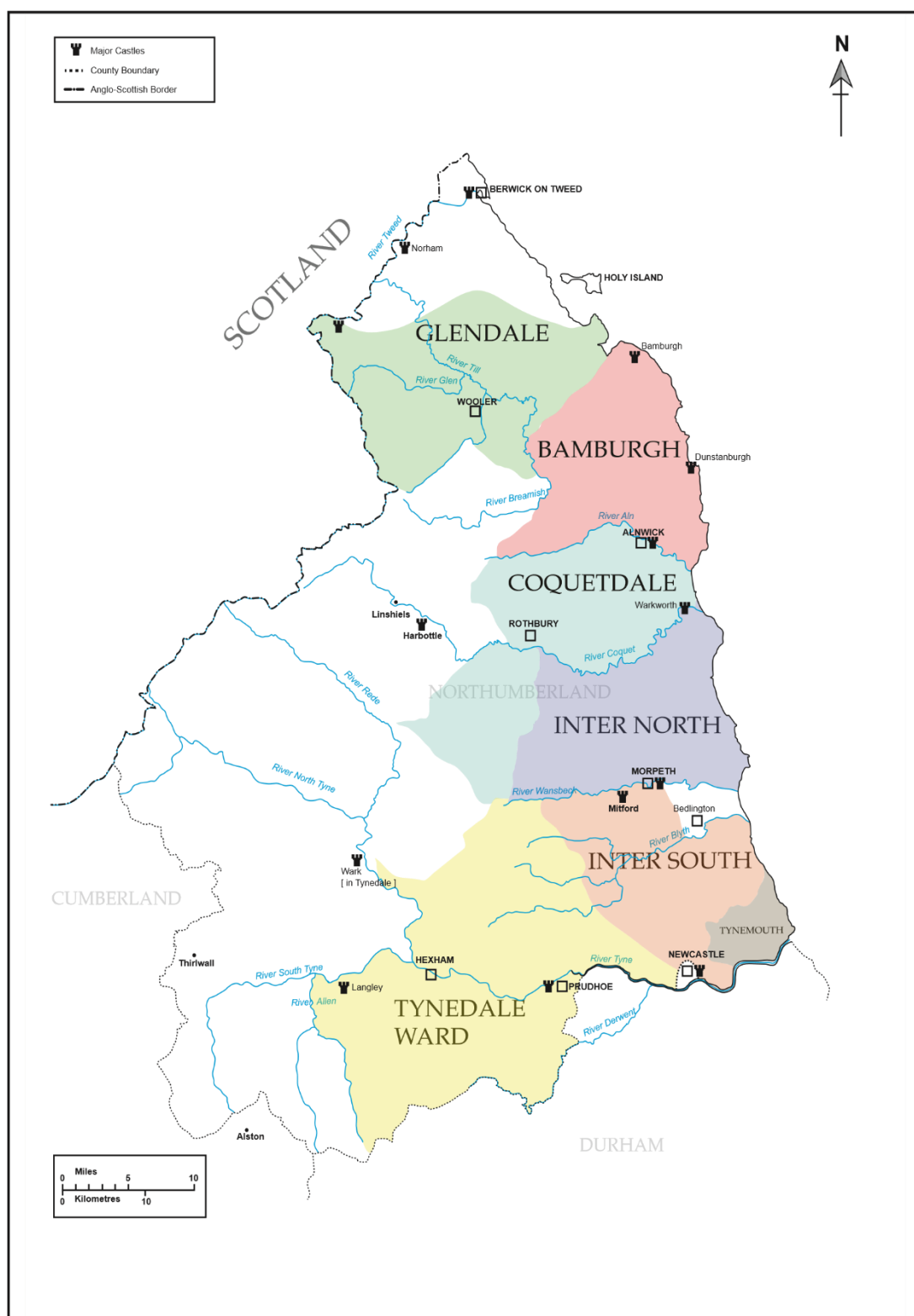
⁶⁶ The effect of this calculation is that $64\frac{1}{2}$ fees are counted from an actual total of $66\frac{2}{7}$.

⁶⁷ The abbey of Newminster, near Morpeth, was owed half a knight's fee and Tynemouth $\frac{15}{56}$ of a fee. A number of townships belonging to the liberty of Tynemouth omitted by the commission are noted in *NCH*, vol. 8, 208.

Table 1. Percentage of Knights' Fees Held by the Crown,
Nobility and Gentry, 1428

	Administrative Ward						
	Bamburgh	Coquetdale	Glendale	Inter North	Inter South	Tynedale	Whole County
Fees (No.)	9¾	10	9¾	11½	11¼	12¼	64½
Crown (%)	41.0	42.5	0	71.8	57.8	30.6	44.2
Nobility (%)	59.0	57.5	82.0	28.2	13.2	44.9	46.1
Gentry (%)	0	0	18.0	0	29.0	24.5	9.7

Note: Fees due to estates held temporarily by the crown have been assigned to the rank of the customary tenant.



Map 3. Administrative Wards, 1428

A total of 64 whole fees were owed within the county, not a large number compared to Nottingham. In this particular county 158 fees were owed solely to mesne landlords, which takes no account of those due to the crown.⁶⁸ In Northumberland, the crown and nobility were closely matched in the number of fees due with the gentry commanding a small but decisive share in some wards. More than one fee-holder was represented in five of the six wards and the fees due to each type of landholder were largely concentrated in particular areas. The crown was strongest in mid-Northumberland to the eastern coastal plain between the rivers Wansbeck and Coquet, the nobility in Glendale and the gentry in the south-eastern corner of the county between the Wansbeck and the Tyne. A diluted pattern of lordship prevailed in southern Northumberland with fees shared amongst the three categories of holder. At this point in time, the balance of property was held by the nobility but by a very narrow margin indeed.

The distribution of fees amongst the nobility is shown below in Table 1.1. Eight baronies with a castle as its *caput* were in the possession of the peerage. The upper echelon of the nobility, they received a hereditary personal summons to attend parliament and the legal privilege of trial by their equals.⁶⁹ Alnwick, Langley and Warkworth were held by Henry Percy, second earl of Northumberland, the only peer resident in the county; Morpeth by John, lord Greystoke; Prudhoe by John, duke of

⁶⁸ Payling, *Political Society*, p. 8.

⁶⁹ Brown, *Governance*, pp. 177-82; Given-Wilson, *English Nobility*, p. 57.

Bedford; Styford by the Neville earls of Westmorland and members of the family.⁷⁰ Wooler had descended to the two daughters of Philip, lord Darcy, still in their minorities.⁷¹ Walton was held by John, lord Scrope of Masham and Upsal.

Table 1.1. Percentage of Knights' Fees Held by Members of the Nobility, 1428

	Administrative Ward						
	Bamburgh	Coquetdale	Glendale	Inter North	Inter South	Tynedale	Whole County
Fees (No.)	5¾	5¾	8	3¼	1½	5½	29¾
Bedford (%)						36.4	6.7
Darcy (%)			62.5	7.7			17.6
Greystoke (%)					100		5.0
Neville (%)						63.6	11.8
Percy (%)	100	100	37.5				48.8
Scrope (%)				92.3			10.1

Percy holdings in the county at this date were reduced from the level enjoyed by the first earl of Northumberland before his rebellion from 1405-8 (Map 4). Though his

⁷⁰ The estates of the late Ralph Neville, first earl of Westmorland, were in the crown's hand at this time.

⁷¹ The Darcy properties were not partitioned until the early 1430s, *CCR*, 1429-35, pp. 143, 207.

grandson, also Henry Percy, had been restored to the family's title and estates as the second earl in 1416, some forfeited properties had not been recovered.⁷² The lordship of Prudhoe and various manors had been granted to John, duke of Bedford, which remained in his possession throughout his lifetime.⁷³

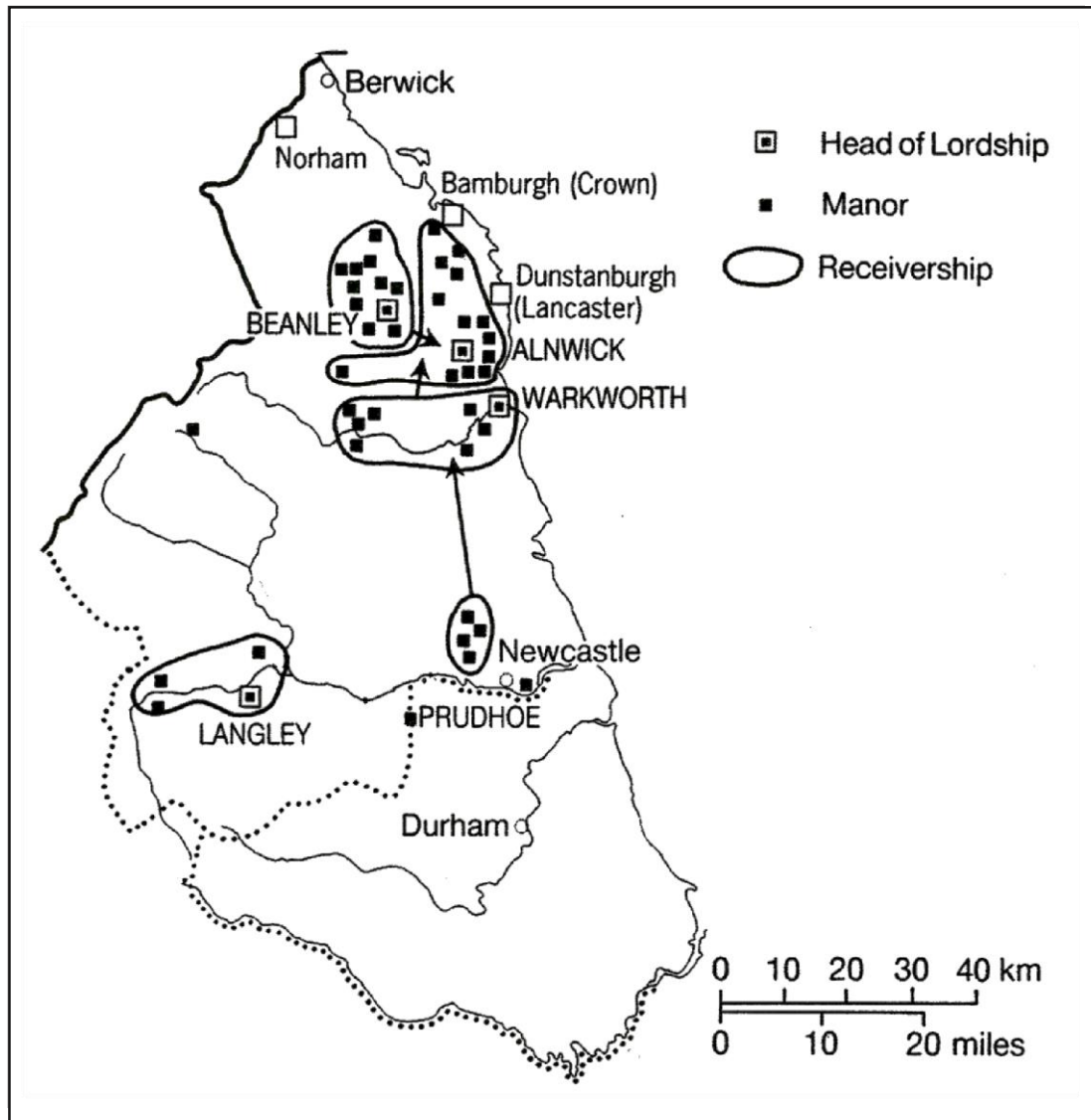
Henry Percy did dominate the county in terms of the quantity of fees held. However, considered from a geographical perspective it was only in the north of the county, in Bamburgh and Coquetdale, that he had an unrivalled position. Greystoke was the only other peer ascendant in a particular area, the remaining three wards were divided.

Ascertaining the number of tenants defies accuracy as the records sometimes state that property was held by named individuals and 'others'. In the following analysis married couples listed as joint fee holders have been counted as one tenant. Fees attached to land in the king's hand have also been credited with one tenant. The crown had a total of thirty-five tenants, of whom twenty-nine were under baronial rank. The number of fees owed by tenants ranged from a fractional $\frac{1}{4}$ to 2. A fee, however, is an unreliable indicator of wealth.⁷⁴ For example, Roger Thornton held of the crown by one knight's

⁷² Although the manor, castle and lordship of Langley had been granted to Robert Umfraville (d. 1437) for life, the barony was recovered by the earl, Bean, *Estates*, pp. 69-77.

⁷³ Ibid., pp. 69-77; *CIPM*, 1432-37, pp. 377-78.

⁷⁴ Cf. Ellis, 'Civilizing Northumberland', 137.



Map 4. Percy Estates, 1428

Adapted from A.J. Pollard, *North-Eastern England during the Wars of the Roses* (Oxford, 1990) by kind permission of the author.

fee but he was one of the richest merchants in Newcastle.⁷⁵ Of the thirty-five tenants of the crown, nineteen owed exclusive service.

Approximately ninety-eight tenants held of mesne lords, around a third of whom held of more than one lord. The distribution of tenants between the nobility and gentry is shown in Table 1.2. Gentry fee-holders were a small group consisting of Eure, Fenwick, Grey, Lisle, Percy of Atholl, Umfraville and Widdrington.⁷⁶

Table 1.2 Distribution of Mesne Tenants Holding by Knight's Fee

	Bedford	Darcy	Gentry	Greystoke	Neville	Percy	Scrope
No. Mesne Tenants	7	17	25	5	14	41	10
No. Exclusive Tenants	4	10	18	2	6	23	3

In summary, the crown had a third of the number of exclusive tenants compared to that of the nobility and gentry. In theory, at least, the breakdown of exclusive tenants is an indicator of the balance of power since, in theory at least, a tenant's loyalties were not divided. Percy had slightly more exclusive mesne tenants than the crown and

⁷⁵ Roskell et al., *HOC*, vol. 4, 596.

⁷⁶ The prior of Tynemouth held the vill of Denton of Henry, lord Scrope, by $\frac{1}{5}$ of a knight's fee.

outstripped other peers by far.⁷⁷ Collectively, the gentry was Percy's closest rival. But land changed hands for numerous reasons and regularly shifted the balance of power to and fro. A few years later the daughters of lord Darcy found husbands in the gentry, who then held the estates in their right.⁷⁸ And, after the duke of Bedford's death the lordship of Prudhoe was returned to the earl of Northumberland, who held the reversion.⁷⁹

As Andy King has noted, modern historians have assumed that because the Percies held vast estates in Northumberland, the family must 'have dominated the county to an extraordinary degree'.⁸⁰ Yet 'even the greatest magnates could not enforce their will in the localities'.⁸¹ King has argued that although the gentry of Northumberland were prepared to fight against the Scots, neither the first earl of Northumberland, nor his son, Hotspur, had a firm hold over the gentry in their rebellions against the crown.⁸² The few that did lend their support were tenants who were solely dependent on the Percies.⁸³ Yet even their exclusive tenants followed the lead of the vast majority of local gentry and kept their distance in the dispute between the Percies and the Nevilles during 1450s. Only two Percy retainers, Sir William Bertram and John Carliol appear to have entered the fray.⁸⁴

⁷⁷ Cf. James, *Society, Politics and Culture*, p. 2, who refers to the 'many mesne tenants by knight service which survived on the great aristocratic estates of the Cliffords and Percies'.

⁷⁸ *CCR*, 1429-35, pp. 143, 207.

⁷⁹ *CIPM*, 1432-37, pp. 377-78.

⁸⁰ King, in Dodd and Biggs, *Henry IV*, p. 145.

⁸¹ Hicks, *Bastard Feudalism*, p. 163.

⁸² King, in Dodd and Biggs, *Henry IV*, pp. 145-57.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

⁸⁴ Griffiths, 'Local Rivalries and National Politics', 604.

With just 64 whole knights' fees owed in Northumberland, the county was not technically as feudal as Nottinghamshire, where 158 fees were owed by landholders other than the crown. Whilst Henry Percy had a greater number of exclusive tenants in the county than the crown, the difference was not significant. The earl did not dominate the county territorially, his authority over the mesne tenantry was limited to Bamburgh and Coquetdale. In terms of the local loyalties of the Northumbrian gentry to the Percies, these ties did not generally support actions against the crown or private war.

2

Wealth

Chris Given-Wilson ventured that the nobility were set apart from lesser landowners not only by legal privilege but ‘economically, socially and politically’.¹ This chapter considers the distribution of wealth amongst the Percies and others and whether the county was particularly impoverished because of its proximity to Scotland.

Parliament made seven grants for the direct taxation of personal wealth from land in the fifteenth century: two in 1404 (March and November), 1411, 1431, 1435, 1450 and 1472. The subsidies of 1431 and 1472 proved impossible to administer and were subsequently withdrawn.² Parliament grudgingly agreed to a subsidy in March 1404, insisting that it was not a precedent and that no record of it be retained.³ Northumberland was not in fact assessed on this occasion as counties adjacent to Scotland were exempted.⁴ Immunity from payment of the second grant of 1404 was probably awarded too since no commission was ordered.⁵ Although commissioners were instructed in connection with the subsidies of 1411 and 1450 no records are extant, which suggests further reliefs.⁶

¹ Given-Wilson, *English Nobility*, p. 65.

² Jurkowski et al., *Lay Taxes*, pp. 88-89, 113.

³ Ibid., p. 74.

⁴ *CFR*, 1399-1405, p. 252.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 289-92.

⁶ *CPR*, 1408-13, p. 380; R. Virgoe, ‘The Parliamentary Subsidy of 1450’, *HR*, 55 (1982), 138.

The only surviving record for the county relates to the subsidy granted on 23 December 1435, when the crown's finances were firmly in the red and following a series of crises: the renewal of the Franco-Burgundian Treaty, the advance of the Valois armies and disturbance on the Scottish Borders.⁷ This particular subsidy applied to laity and clergy 'seised of manors, lands, tenements, rents, annuities, offices, or of any other temporal possession as of freehold in England, for his own personal use, or of any other person or persons for his use, of the yearly value of 100s. over and above expenses and charges'. The clergy were liable only for possessions purchased or alienated in mortmain (held in perpetuity) since 1292. More refined than its predecessors, this subsidy was calculated at variable rates rather than a standard figure in order to generate a greater financial return. Individuals with yearly net incomes between £5-£100 were charged at the rate of 6d. on every pound, those with £101 to £399 at 6d. on the first £100 and 8d. every pound thereafter and those with £400 or more at 2s. on every pound on the entire amount. In addition, the reach of the grant was greater than usual since it extended to residents within liberties that were generally exempt.

Assessment procedures differed according to rank. On 29 January 1436 'sufficient' persons were commissioned to inquire into residents responsible for payment, excluding the nobility. Commissioners were required to endorse their findings by return to the exchequer by 25 March including the names of defaulters who failed to appear in person, or where permitted by proxy, so that they could be summoned before the lord

⁷ R.A. Griffiths, *The Reign of Henry VI: The Exercise of Royal Authority, 1422-61* (Stroud, 1998), pp. 118-122, 199-201. For the remainder of this paragraph and that which follows see, A. Curry (ed.), 'Henry VI: Parliament of October 1435, Text and Translation', in *PROME*, item 12; *CFR*, 1430-37, p. 258; Jurkowski et al., *Lay Taxes*, pp. xxxvii-xxxix, 92.

treasurer and barons of the exchequer. Payment of the tax was due in one instalment on 22 April 1436. The nobility were to be examined by the lord chancellor and lord treasurer but the arrangements lagged behind until May for want of a writ of authorisation.

H. L. Gray made the first detailed study of the assessments to survey the social structure of fifteenth-century England, though his appraisal subsequently came under heavy fire.⁸ Whilst the assessments are problematic, underestimating both the number of people chargeable and actual level of income, the underpayment of tax is regarded as endemic. As expressions of relative rather than absolute values the extant material has regularly been employed as an index of the comparative wealth of landed society.⁹ Gray observed that almost all of the sixteen extant returns are in the form of the particulars returned by commissioners ‘but that for Northumberland was copied by chance onto the enrolled account’, a record of collections rendered by sheriffs at the exchequer that summarised the yield of the tax.¹⁰ The irregular nature of this entry is also repeated in the TNA catalogue and current literature: ‘assessments ... survive in E

⁸ H.L. Gray, ‘Incomes From Land in England in 1436’, *EHR*, 49 (1934), 607-39; T.B. Pugh and C.D. Ross, ‘The English Baronage and the Income Tax of 1436’, *BIHR*, 26 (1953), 1-28; T.B. Pugh, ‘The Magnates, Knights and Gentry’, in S.B. Chrimes et al., *Fifteenth-Century England 1399-1509* (Manchester, 1972), pp. 97-101.

⁹ See, for example, Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 50-79; Payling, *Political Society*, pp. 13-18; Pollard, *North-Eastern England*, p. 94.

¹⁰ Gray, ‘Incomes from Land’, 610-11. The assessments include a return for London, one of six cities administered as counties. Tax grant details in the TNA catalogue identify that at the time of writing Gray seems to have been unaware of the particulars of account for York, TNA: PRO, E 179/217/42. The return for Surrey has since been located in Surrey Record Office, Guildford.

179 documents, except for the assessment for Northumberland, which, for some reason, was copied onto the enrolled account'.¹¹

Yet the Northumberland assessment has survived and is recorded in the TNA catalogue as located at E 179/158/38. The call reference relates to a leather pouch that contains a number of items: the certificate from the county commissioners verifying their actions; a record of the inquisition; details of taxpayers and the sheriff's account of the collection of the subsidy submitted at the exchequer. These documents then provide a complete account of the local administration of the tax. The sheriff's account is a valuable 'find' as it suggests the affluence of local taxpayers has been understated.

The exchequer enrolled account has suffered minor damage but the existence of the inquisition return enables reconstruction of the loss.¹² Both records subsequently correspond in terms of the name and number of people assessed, their respective incomes and amount of tax due. Thirty-eight men, comprising thirty-five secular landholders and three clergy, were identified as liable for payment. An overview of the county assessment is shown in Table 2, which excludes clerical charges in order to permit a comparison with lay society in other counties.¹³

¹¹ TNA: PRO, Exchequer, E 179 Database, Tax Grant Details; Jurkowski et al., *Lay Taxes*, p. 92. My italics.

¹² TNA: PRO, E 359/29, rot. 6d (enrolled account). Surnames have been lost entirely in three instances, leaving just the Christian names of William and two men named Thomas. An incomplete entry relating to one of the latter names has a double underline beneath, which seems to be have written in error; cf. E 179/158/38, mm. 3-4d.

¹³ For clerical assessments see Appendix 3.

Table 2. Summary of the Tax Assessment for Northumberland, 1436

Income £ p.a.	No. Assessments	Total Income £ p.a.	%
200 +	1	400	30.4
100-199	1	160	12.2
40-99	5 ¹⁴	360	27.4
20-39	11	244	18.6
10-19	9	103	7.8
5-9	8	47	3.6
Total	35	1314	100

Around a third of the number of exclusive mesne tenants suggested in the assessment of knights' fees in 1428 appear in this assessment. As the structure contrasts with the general outline of the feudal pyramid, broadening out steeply from the apex to the base, it suggests that fewer landholders than would be expected had a taxable income.¹⁵ Wealth was clearly in very few hands. Two people commanded 42 per cent of the county's total wealth, seven individuals accounted for 70 per cent and just eighteen landholders controlled more than 88 per cent.

Northumberland had fewer freeholders and less total taxable wealth than the majority of counties with an extant return.¹⁶ Only the small southern county of Huntingdonshire, near Cambridge, returned a lower quantity of assessments. Northumberland, with a

¹⁴ Cf. Payling, *Political Society*, p. 17, Table 1.6. Although four individuals are identified here, rather than five, the calculations correspond.

¹⁵ For example, see E. Acheson, *A Gentry Community: Leicestershire in the Fifteenth Century, c.1422-c.1485* (Cambridge, 1992) based on an analysis of Appendix 1, pp. 204-10; Payling, *Political Society*, p. 14.

¹⁶ The content of this paragraph is based on the figures from the fifteen county returns found in Payling, *Political Society*, p. 17, Table 1.6.

taxable wealth of £1314 p.a., sat at the top of the 'third division' in the county wealth league table, above Middlesex, rated annually at £1261; Cumberland, at £1163; Westmorland, at £942; and Huntingdonshire, at £648. At the most significant social levels Northumberland had much in common with Huntingdonshire. Its landed élite also consisted of two people with £100 p.a. or more who claimed 43 per cent of the county's total wealth. Their position was unrivalled in any area, closely followed by the duo from Northumberland with a slightly smaller proportion. Both areas also had very few landholders with an income of £40-£99 p.a., but Northumbrians had a higher level of income than their counterparts near Cambridge. Their respective share of county wealth gave Huntingdonshire a ranking of ninth place from a total of fifteen, with Northumberland faring better in fifth place. In summary, Northumbrian greater knights were proportionally wealthier than in any other county, bar one, and lesser knights wealthier than two-thirds of the same rank elsewhere.

The structure of assessments in the northern counties varied. Westmorland had no élite taxpayers with £100 p.a. or more, whilst those in Cumberland had less than half the financial resources of their peers in Northumberland. Below this level, taxpayers in Cumberland and Westmorland with an income of £40-£99 p.a. held a greater share of county wealth than their Northumbrian equivalents. Apart from one exception, they were proportionally the wealthiest lesser knights of any county.

The names of resident lay taxpayers, annual incomes and locations of property that they were assessed upon are shown in Table 2.1. Commissioners acknowledged the independent status of liberties. Property in Durham is noted as 'within the bishopric of'

and that in Hexham (or Hexhamshire), Redesdale and Tynedale were noted as ‘within the liberty of’. All references to Newcastle are to Newcastle upon Tyne.

As often noted in these records, yearly incomes are rounded, which casts some doubt on the objectivity of the exercise.¹⁷ The geographical insularity of the majority of taxpayers is evident. In Northumberland, as elsewhere, the knightly class generally held the most widespread properties.¹⁸ Some calculations were made on property in more than one county but, unfortunately, the contribution that each made to the landholder’s total income is unspecified. With incomes of £100 p.a. or more, Sir Robert Umfraville and Sir William Eure fall into the category of greater knights, though Umfraville was clearly in a league of his own, comparable with a small baronial income.¹⁹ Eure’s appearance before the Northumberland commission is surprising for, although he held ancestral lands at Kirkley and other properties in the county, his main residence at this time was at Witton-le-Wear in Durham.²⁰

¹⁷ Gray, ‘Incomes From Land’, 612.

¹⁸ C. Carpenter, ‘The Lesser Landholders and the Inquisitions *Post Mortem*’, in M. Hicks (ed.), *The Fifteenth-Century Inquisitions Post Mortem: A Companion* (Woodbridge, 2012), p. 58.

¹⁹ Although the Umfravilles were once titled earl of Angus, the designation was no longer in use.

²⁰ *NCH*, vol. 12, 495; Liddy, *Bishopric of Durham*, p. 47.

Table 2.1. Lay Taxpayers and Liabilities, 1436

Taxpayer	Income £ p.a.	Location of Possessions
Sir Robert Umfraville	£400	Northumberland; York; Lincoln; Durham.
Sir William Eure	£160	Northumberland; York; Durham.
Sir Ralph Grey	£ 80	Northumberland; Newcastle; Durham.
Sir Robert Ogle	£ 80	Northumberland; Cumberland; Lancaster; Newcastle; Durham.
Sir John Widdrington	£ 80	Northumberland; Cumberland; Newcastle; Tynedale; Redesdale; Hexhamshire.
Sir John Bertram	£ 60	Northumberland; Nottingham; Newcastle.
Roger Widdrington, <i>armiger</i>	£ 60	Northumberland.
William Carnaby	£ 30	Northumberland; Hexham.
Sir William Swinburne	£ 27	Northumberland and Tynedale.
Robert Harbottle	£ 24	Northumberland; Newcastle; Durham.
Sir John Middleton	£ 23	Northumberland and Nottingham.
John Cartington	£ 20	Northumberland; Newcastle; Durham.
William Delaval	£ 20	Northumberland.
Thomas Lilburn	£ 20	Northumberland.
Sir John Manners	£ 20	Northumberland.
Robert Musgrave	£ 20	Northumberland.
William Strother	£ 20	Northumberland and Durham.
John Swinhow of Rock	£ 20	Northumberland.
John Horsley, 'apprentic' legis'	£ 14	Northumberland; Newcastle; Hexhamshire.
Thomas Ilderton	£ 13	Northumberland.
Gerard Mitford	£ 13	Northumberland.
Robert Raymes	£ 13	Northumberland.
John Belasis	£ 10	Northumberland.
Thomas Grey of Horton	£ 10	Northumberland.
Richard Lilburn	£ 10	Northumberland.
Thomas Middleton	£ 10	Northumberland.
Nicholas Turpin	£ 10	Northumberland.
William Benet	£ 8	Northumberland.
Thomas Blenkinsop	£ 6	Northumberland; Newcastle; Hexham.
Robert Elrington	£ 6	Northumberland.
William Lawson	£ 6	Northumberland.
John Park	£ 6	Northumberland.
John Harle	£ 5	Northumberland.
John Trewick	£ 5	Northumberland.
Edward Wetwang	£ 5	Northumberland.

There was some distance economically between those in the highest income bracket of £100 or more and the next, those with incomes of £40-£99, who may be described as lesser knights, a demarcation that has been noted in other areas.²¹ Although the knightly class were divided fiscally, they shared a common history in being drawn from long established families.²²

This list bears little resemblance to the list of ‘persons of quality’ required to take an oath to keep the king’s peace and not to maintain evil-doers in 1434.²³ More than a dozen men taxed had not been required to take the oath two years previously, whilst around two dozen who did take the oath were not taxed. Nevertheless, discrepancies between these two sources are not unusual.²⁴

As demonstrated in various local studies, wealth is not a reliable indicator of social status.²⁵ Roger Widdrington, identified as an esquire, was potentially a knight since men with an income of £40 p.a. net from land were required to present themselves for knighthood or be subject to distraint (fined).²⁶ It is not possible to say how many others took this option as few records of distraints of knighthood have survived. A return from 1410/1 identified Thomas Heselrigg of Eslington as the only candidate within the last

²¹ Payling, *Political Society*, p. 35; Acheson, *Leicestershire*, pp. 40-41.

²² Wright, *Derbyshire Gentry*, p. 8. Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, p. 61.

²³ CPR, 1429-36, p. 396; Appendix 2. Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, p. 67, who suggests the Warwickshire men identified in the list for Warwickshire owed some form of service to the crown.

²⁴ For example, see Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, p. 50.

²⁵ For example, see Wright, *Derbyshire Gentry*, p. 2.

²⁶ The process had lost its original purpose and become a revenue-raising measure, Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, p. 47.

three years and another, from 1457/8, gave a nil return for the previous three years.²⁷ Conversely, Sir John Middleton, Sir John Manners and Sir William Swinburne, who should have had at least that amount, apparently had insufficient means to maintain their status. Clearly, there are instances where the records need to be taken with a large pinch of salt. Sir John Middleton had estates in five other English counties and Sir John Bertram held property in seven counties, information that is missing from the return.²⁸ Apart from one instance, the only taxpayers accorded a rank were either would-be or actual knights, which implies that it was the only meaningful distinction below the peerage. At a lower level, William Lawson of Cramlington had a net income of just £6 p.a. but was apparently an esquire.²⁹ William Benet of Kenton had £8 yet could still be designated as a gentleman.

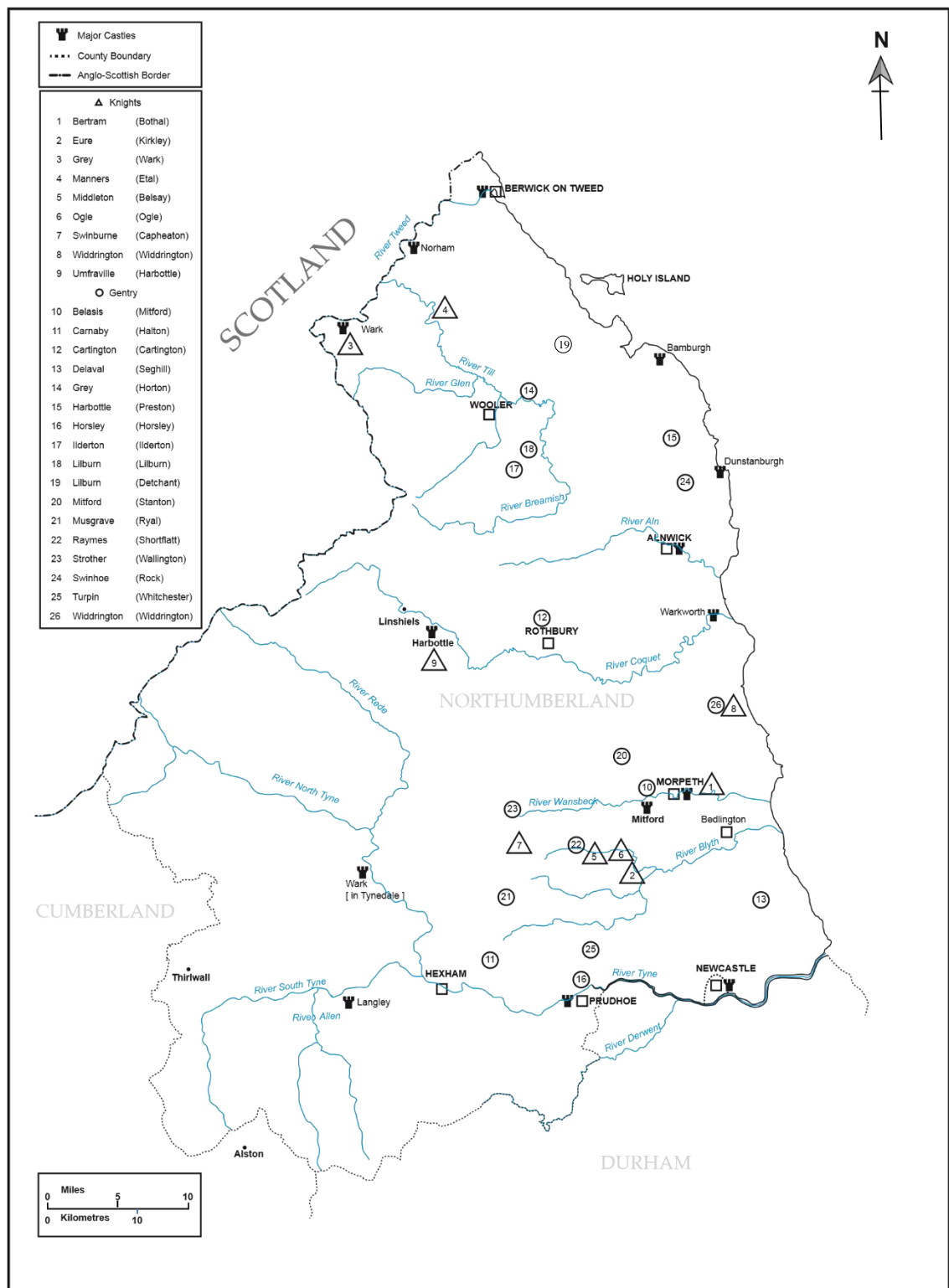
Those assessed at £10 or more were spread unevenly across the county (Map 4).³⁰ The bulk of taxpayers were based in mid-Northumberland and the eastern coastal plain; very few lived in alignment with or west of Hexham. Northern Northumberland was also poorly represented compared to the area to the south of the Coquet, though the greatest number of taxpayers were actually situated between the Wansbeck and Tyne. Throughout the county the rich soil of river courses provided a prime area for settlement and cohesion clustered around the Breamish-Till and Blyth-Pont basins.

²⁷ TNA: PRO, E 198/4/39 mm. 1-2 and E 198/4/16 respectively.

²⁸ Roskell et al, *HOC*, vol. 2, 213.

²⁹ *CPR*, 1429-36, p. 435.

³⁰ Thomas Middleton is excepted. Though he was seised with others of property in Chillingham in 1428, he resided at Silksworth in Durham.



Map 5. Seats of Lay Taxpayers Assessed in Northumberland at £10 or More, 1436

However, the picture of landed society portrayed by the tax assessment is imperfect in a number of respects. People failed to appear before commissioners. In Northumberland, Sir William Elmden, John Fenwick, Thomas Haggerston and William Muschamp defaulted and their names were duly notified to the exchequer.³¹ The defaulters' list for Northumberland created at the exchequer also includes residents of Durham and York, thus envisioning Northumberland as a much larger area that spanned the Tweed to the Humber.³² Moreover, a commission was not an all-embracing remit. Crown manors and land belonging to the king's wards were exempted and landholders with properties in other areas could choose which county they wished to be assessed in.³³ Henry Fenwick of Fenwick, for example, elected to be taxed in Cumberland and Nicholas Bowet was assessed in Lincolnshire on his possessions in that county, Northumberland and 'elsewhere'.³⁴ Where individuals had a choice, the decision about where to be taxed was a matter of personal preference. Whereas Sir William Eure who had properties north and south of the Tyne elected to be taxed in Northumberland, Sir William Elmden, who was in the same position, did not.

The Northumberland commission was not empowered to deal with all resident landholders below the peerage. Other provision was made for the assessment of residents within liberties that were generally immune from royal taxation.³⁵ The liberties of Redesdale and Tynemouth, as noted earlier, were subject to taxation and

³¹ TNA: PRO, E 179/158/38 m. 5.

³² Cf. Pollard, 'Introduction', in idem, *The North of England in the Age of Richard III*, p. x.

³³ Gray, 'Incomes from Land', 613; Payling, *Political Society*, p. 15.

³⁴ TNA: PRO, E 179/90/26; Gray, 'Incomes from Land', 635.

³⁵ *CFR*, 1430-37, p. 262.

normally treated as part of the county.³⁶ Tynemouth came under the auspices of the Northumberland commission and Redesdale was probably incorporated into Tynedale.³⁷ Bishop Langley was appointed to hold a commission for the liberty of Durham, John, archbishop of York, was similarly charged for Hexhamshire and Henry Bouchier for Tynedale.³⁸ Nevertheless, no assessment was made in the palatinate but a contribution was made in excess of the tax due with the caveat that it was not to be considered as a precedent.³⁹ No records are extant for Hexhamshire or Tynedale.

The incomplete picture of a penurious society has also been shaped to some extent by the consequences of war. Assessments were based on clear yearly value but how, exactly, was that figure calculated? Was it reckoned as an average over a particular term, or more specifically over the past year? Border warfare added another variable to the formulation of an estimate. Here, at least, fluctuations in the core value of real estate tended to be the norm.⁴⁰ Insecurities were dealt with in different ways. In some instances, contingency plans were made for additional payments or allowances should property be devastated by the Scots.⁴¹ Agnes Lilburn's dower settlement, on the other hand, indicates that a middle line was adopted when making a financial evaluation of

³⁶ No separate commissions were ordered for Redesdale or Tynemouth.

³⁷ Holford and Stringer, *Border Liberties and Loyalties*, p. 391.

³⁸ *CFR*, 1430-37, p. 262.

³⁹ A. Curry (ed.), 'Henry VI: Parliament of 1435, 'Appendix', in *PROME*, item 7. The palatinate of Chester also contributed on the same condition. For a discussion of the circumstances relating to Durham see Liddy, *Bishopric of Durham*, pp. 207-08.

⁴⁰ Cf. M. Holford, 'Notoriously Unreliable': The Valuations and Extents', in M. Hicks (ed.), *The Fifteenth-Century Inquisition Post Mortem: A Companion* (Woodbridge, 2012), pp. 118-119.

⁴¹ A. Goodman, 'The Anglo-Scottish Marches in the Fifteenth Century: A Frontier Society?', in R.A. Mason (ed.), *Scotland and England, 1286-1815* (Edinburgh, 1987), pp. 18-33.

property, with ‘consideration being given to the value not only in time of peace alone, nor in time of war, but reckoning one with the other’.⁴²

If assessments were based on the previous twelve months then net incomes were most likely lower than the average. The date of the Northumberland inquisition, held in the first quarter of 1436, is important because of recent Scottish raids. In autumn 1435 the earl of Northumberland provided military support to the Scottish Dunbar family following James I’s dispossession of George Dunbar, earl of March, a foray that ended in defeat at the battle of Piperdean.⁴³ Naturally enough, the Scots retaliated against the intrusion soon after with reprisals on English soil as evidenced in the annual accounts for the episcopal and prioral estates of Norham and Holy Island for 1435/6 that reveal severe financial loss.⁴⁴ The impact of this event on lay estates is not known but the episode could easily have caused landowners with vulnerable estates to drop down the taxable scale or be pushed off entirely. Christian Liddy’s monograph on neighbouring Durham provides some support for the theory as minor landowners with an income of £0-£20 were numerically the most significant section of landed society, even though their number almost halved between 1345 and 1434.⁴⁵

Notionally, financial details from IPMs taken around this time could be used for comparison against the county assessments, though the accuracy of valuations during

⁴² *NDD*, pp. 236-37.

⁴³ R. Lomas, ‘The Impact of Scottish Warfare: The Scots and South Tweedside, c.1290-c.1520’, *SHR*, 75 (1996), 160; M. Brown, *James I* (East Linton, 2000), p. 161; Pollard, *Late Medieval England*, p. 105.

⁴⁴ Lomas, ‘Scottish Warfare’, 160.

⁴⁵ Liddy, *Bishopric of Durham*, pp. 65-68.

the fifteenth century is a thorny subject.⁴⁶ Private estate accounts tend to contain realistic judgments although the lack of extant material thwarts such an exercise for Northumberland. Very few individuals died shortly after assessment where an analysis could be made. IPMs were taken for John, lord Greystoke, John Neville, lord Latimer, and Sir Robert Ogle in 1436, and Sir Robert Umfraville in 1437 but these records are awkward to work with because they also derived income from other counties.

Two IPMs held the following year for Thomas Lilburn and Sir John Manners offer a greater degree of clarity as they drew their incomes entirely from Northumberland.⁴⁷ Both proceedings took place on the same day, 20 October 1438, when their properties were valued yearly at £4. 17s. 0d. and £3. 2s. 4d. respectively, well below their 1436 assessments that specified an annual net income of £20. But Anglo-Scottish relations had taken a turn for the worse within months of assessment.⁴⁸ War broke out in May 1436 and continued until March 1438 when a new truce was set in place.⁴⁹ Major cross-border skirmishes appear to have been avoided during this time but the returns state that profits from the bulk of their landed estate situated north of the Aln had been reduced at the hands of the Scots.⁵⁰ Thomas Lilburn held half the manor and vill of Belford, the hamlet of Easington, the vill of Beanley, the manors of Shawdon and Lilburn, which were stated to be worth no more due to ‘destruction by Scots and the

⁴⁶ For a discussion of this subject see Holford, ‘Valuations and Extents’, in Hicks, *Fifteenth-Century Inquisitions*, pp. 117-44.

⁴⁷ *CIPM*, 1437-42, pp. 121-22; *ibid.*, pp. 122-23.

⁴⁸ At this date, a decline in income from land may have resulted from another contributory factor, see A.J. Pollard, ‘The North-Eastern Economy and the Agrarian Crisis of 1438-1440’, *NH*, 25 (1989), 88-105.

⁴⁹ Neville, *Violence, Custom and Law*, pp. 125, 137.

⁵⁰ Lomas, ‘Scottish Warfare’, 60-61.

barrenness of the land', with the implication that the latter was consequential. John Manners held the manor and vill of Etal that was also described in the same terms as the bulk of Lilburn's estate. Superficially, the findings appear plausible.

In addition to general concerns regarding IPM valuations, King has argued that during the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries Northumbrian tenants-in-chief deliberately and systematically exaggerated the extent of war damage.⁵¹ Given the deficit of systematic manorial records, testing whether tenants-in-chief continued the same practice would be best observed against the backdrop of a sustained period of peace. Cynthia Neville has noted that there were few disturbances in the borders from 1406 until 1413, while the succession of truces from 1416-22 'were more apparent than real'.⁵² Independent estate records from Norham and Holy Island show a long phase of recovery after 1406 that continued until the late 1420s, although the estates did not entirely escape the effects of war and, in particular, Sir William Haliburton's abortive raid on the castle at Wark-on-Tweed in 1419.⁵³ The following discussion considers the predominately peaceful decade in Anglo-Scottish affairs from 1408-18, taking the date that King's thesis terminates as the starting point and concluding a year before the assault on Wark.

Some reports of Scottish incursions were made prior to 1413 and, in contrast to the calm of Norhamshire and Islandshire, widespread damage was reported from Belford in

⁵¹ King, thesis, pp. 36-38.

⁵² Neville, *Violence, Custom and Law*, pp. 104, 113.

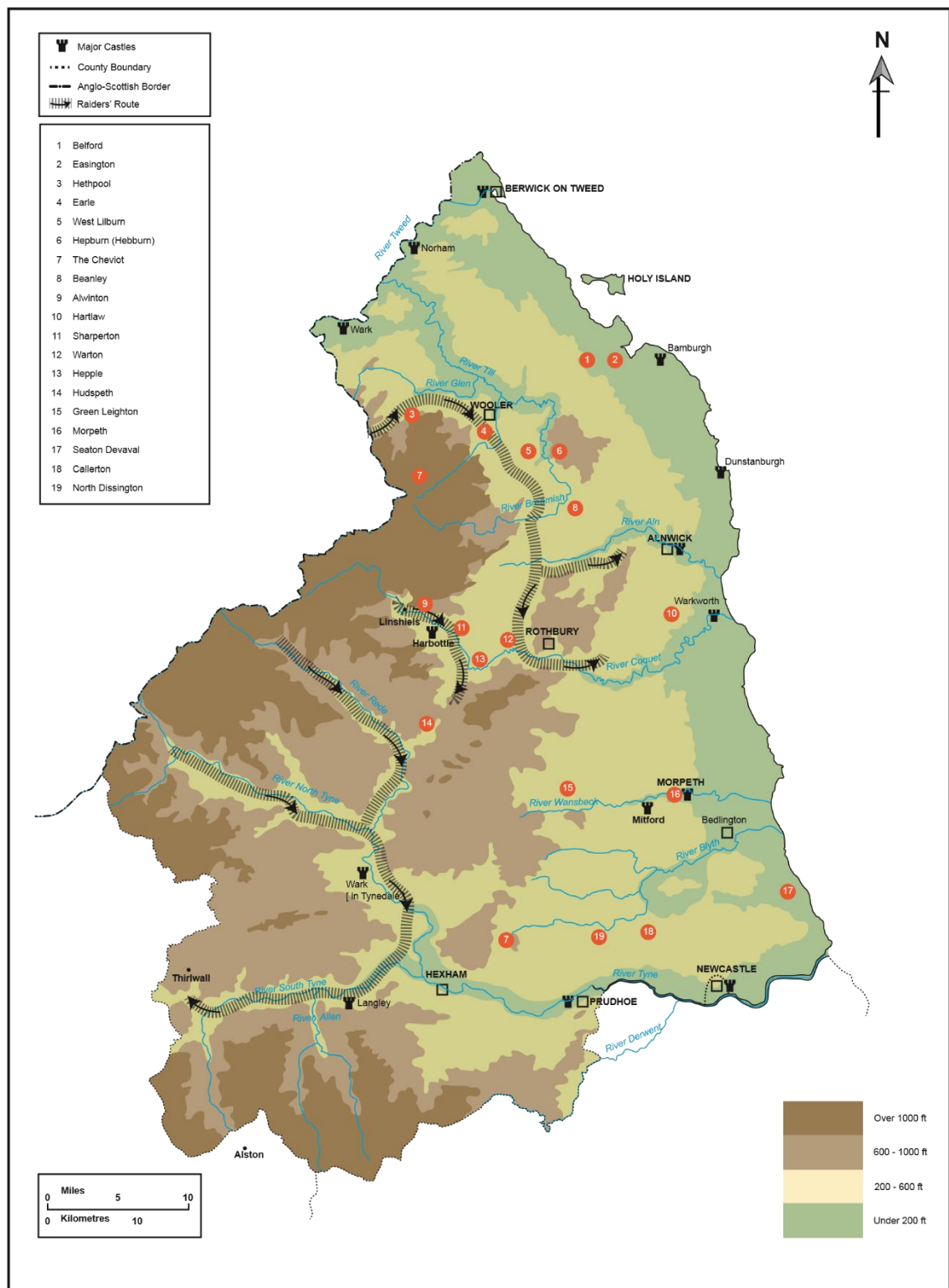
⁵³ Lomas, 'Scottish Warfare', 158-60.

the north to Dissington in the south and from Seaton Delaval on the east coast to the Cheviot Hills to the west.⁵⁴ The weight of number indicates that the Scots concentrated their efforts relatively close to home within an area that stretched from Budle Bay to the Coquet. The logical explanation for this configuration would be that Scottish marauders tended to bypass Norhamshire and Islandshire in favour of more southerly targets. They may well have crossed the border a few miles east of Wark and taken the old Roman road from Coldstream to Morpeth (the line of the modern A 697) or entered Northumberland from Roxburghshire and followed established raiders' routes where the rural landscape offered strategic advantages, providing opportunities for concealment and river corridors that led to the lowlands below (Map 5).⁵⁵ Sites affected near the east coast, Belford, Easington, Morpeth and Hartlaw, suggest movement on the Great North Road from Berwick toward Newcastle (for the most part the modern A1) but it was a secondary route, which presented greater risk because of the proximity of a number of English garrisons.⁵⁶ Locations of damage south of the river Blyth do not lend themselves as easily to the above outlines and appear rather isolated but that is not to say the reports are necessarily suspect. Other landholders in the area could have been affected but sight of this could be obscured by the limitation of the source material. Various pieces of evidence lend support to the reports of damage and particularly those before 1413. John, duke of Lancaster, commented upon the lack of observance of truces in 1408 and two years later the subject was of sufficient concern to be included

⁵⁴ Note that the brevity of the early calendars and the insufficiency of descriptions has prevented the identification of some properties.

⁵⁵ For descriptions of raiders' routes, S.J. Watts with S.J. Watts, *From Border to Middle Shire: Northumberland 1586-1625* (Leicester, 1975), pp. 20-21.

⁵⁶ P. Hindle, *Medieval Roads and Tracks* (Oxford, 2008), p. 59, map 48; Watts, *Border to Middle Shire*, p. 20.



Map 6. Sites Reported Destroyed or Wasted by Scots, 1408-18

Raiders' routes from S.J. Watts with S.J. Watts, *From Border to Middle Shire: Northumberland, 1586-1625* (Leicester, 1975), endmap 1.

in the lord chancellor's opening address to parliament.⁵⁷ Once again, half of the rent due from the duchy estate at Embleton was remitted as result of losses.⁵⁸

Nevertheless, repeated statements that the 'great waste called the forest of Cheviot' was of no value because it was wasted by the Scots appear somewhat dubious.⁵⁹ Given the vastness of this area and its capacity for a variety of land use, it would seem odd that *all* of it was unproductive. Even in war, waste could still command a price. The township of Riplington had been 'totally burnt and destroyed by the Scots' but John Hawley could still make 13s. 4d. yearly from herbage.⁶⁰ In addition to providing grazing for animals, waste could be exploited for the hunting of game and collecting a variety of natural resources.⁶¹ Whilst there was no forest to be seen during the early sixteenth century there was evidently still plenty of wood to be had.⁶² A propensity to undervalue estates no doubt had some bearing on assessments, a subject that deserves closer attention over a longer period than provided in this brief examination, but there is another reason why taxpayers in 1436 might seem to be in a weaker financial position than they actually were.

⁵⁷ Neville, *Violence, Custom and Law*, pp. 106-07.

⁵⁸ *NCH*, vol. 2, 31.

⁵⁹ *CIPM*, 1405-13, p. 348; *ibid.*, p. 350. The Cheviot was part of the barony of Wooler that descended to the daughters of Philip, lord Darcy.

⁶⁰ *CIPM*, 1418-22, p. 241.

⁶¹ H. Fox, 'Lords and Waste', in R. Goddard, J. Langton and M. Müller (eds), *Survival and Discord in Medieval Society: Essays in Honour of Christopher Dyer* (Brepols, 2010), p. 27.

⁶² W.P. Hedley, 'The Mediæval Forests of Northumberland', *AA4*, 28 (1950), 98-99; cf. I.D. White and A.J.L. Winchester (eds), *Society, Landscape and Environment in Upland Britain* (London, 2004), p. 27, where it is noted that in the fifteenth century the Cheviot was to a large extent still wooded.

The sheriff's account of the subsidy discloses that individuals assessed in Northumberland had not been charged on certain items included in the 1435 grant as those in other counties were.⁶³ Consequently, as fewer sources of profit were taxed this surely partly explains the lower return. In his preamble Roger Widdrington qualified his role as late sheriff and collector of the grant and rehearsed its full terms yet in the next section, under the heading 'receipt of money' concerning taxpayers with an annual income of up to £100, the words 'annuities, offices, other temporal possessions and those of other persons to their use' are purposely scored through. Details relating to Sir William Eure, assessed at more than £100, have likewise been altered. The text relating to Sir Robert Umfraville does not take the same form but probability suggests that the same limitation applied.

These amendments were not made for Widdrington's personal gain. His account corresponded with the county commissioners' assessment and he rendered the expected amount of tax due. Moreover, the exchequer seems to have had no issue accepting his interpretation. The enrolled account, which was both audited and corrected, repeats that taxes were collected from those 'seised of manors, lands, tenements and rents as of a free tenement in England to their own use'.

It is impossible to quantify the advantage of the concession individually or communally. Sir Robert Ogle, who was paid £1000 p.a. in times of peace and £2000 in war for the keeping of Roxburgh, appears to have struggled to keep up with the costs

⁶³ TNA: PRO, E 179/158/38 m. 5.

yet he had the financial means to make a loan of £800 to the crown.⁶⁴ A significant number surely held office in a public capacity under the earl of Northumberland who was joint warden of east and west marches with John, earl of Huntingdon, from September 1435 to July 1436.⁶⁵ Life annuities were distributed privately by the earl to local gentry during the 1440s though they were few and generally modest.⁶⁶ If the earl was set on extending and bolstering his influence during this time, the Northumbrian gentry on the whole does not seem to have been a key priority.⁶⁷ Such charges accounted for 15 per cent of the revenues from Alnwick that the receiver accounted for during 1442-43 compared to around 25 per cent from his Yorkshire estates.⁶⁸

There are no extant records that clarify why resident taxpayers in Northumberland were allowed the relief or explain its exceptionality. Whilst the Scots had not breached the Tyne since 1388 no similar concession was made in respect of the north-western counties.⁶⁹ The sheriffs' accounts for Cumberland and Westmorland disclose that tax was paid on all chargeable items.⁷⁰ The county tax return for Northumberland then implies a dialogue between crown and county. The strongest likelihood is that it was

⁶⁴ Roskell et al., *HOC*, vol. 3, 862.

⁶⁵ Storey, 'Wardens of the Marches', 613.

⁶⁶ Bean, *Estates*, pp. 92-93, 97; cf. Pugh, in Chrimes et al., *Fifteenth-Century England*, p. 101.

⁶⁷ It is not possible to make a direct comparison between the two areas at this time because of the want of documentation from the earl's other estates in Northumberland.

⁶⁸ Bean, *Estates*, pp. 89-91.

⁶⁹ M. Holford, A. King and C.D. Liddy, 'North-East England in the Late Middle Ages: Rivers, Boundaries and Identities, 1296-1461', in A. Green and A.J. Pollard (eds), *Regional Identities in North-East England, 1300-2000* (Woodbridge, 2007), p. 40.

⁷⁰ TNA: PRO, E 179/90/26; *ibid.*, E 179/195/32.

made in recognition of the defence of the border and that the east march was more vulnerable than the west.

As noted earlier, the county was probably exempted from most grants of direct taxation in the fifteenth century. A similar story emerges regarding ordinary taxation. Roger Schofield has stated that ‘the northern counties seem to have been required to pay most fifteenth and tenths before 1392. From 1392 to 1415 they were called upon irregularly; and after 1415 scarcely if ever at all’.⁷¹ However, there was no collective immunity north of the Tyne during the early part of the century.⁷² Northumberland and Cumberland were excused from all grants made between 1401 and 1416 barring those of 1406 and 1411, when no allowance appears to have been made. Newcastle was generally excepted whereas Westmorland obtained relief from a little more than half of all subsidies. Thereafter, the lack of formal notifications suggest that exemptions became customary.

The county return then is misleading since it does not indicate the actual number of landholders and hence their economic relationship to one another in context.⁷³

⁷¹ R. Schofield, *Taxation under the Early Tudors* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 65, 239, fn.176. The northern counties are defined here as Cumberland, Durham, Northumberland Westmorland. For a general discussion of this subject in relation to the fifteenth century see G.L. Harriss, ‘Political Society and the Growth of Government in Late Medieval England’, *P&P*, 138 (1993), 28-57; for earlier lay subsidies and the northern counties, idem, *King, Parliament, and Public Finance in Medieval England to 1369* (Oxford, 1975), pp. 348-55.

⁷² For what follows in this paragraph see *CPR*, 1399-1401, pp. 444, 449, 453; *ibid.*, 1401-05, pp. 181-82, 372, 381, 465, 468; *ibid.*, 1405-08, pp. 380, 411; *ibid.*, 1408-13, pp. 192, 198; *ibid.*, 1413-16, pp. 28, 30, 57, 273-75, 371, 381; *ibid.*, 1416-22, pp. 53, 57.

⁷³ Payling, *Political Society*, p. 15.

Furthermore, Henry Percy was assessed as having an income of £1,200 a year, a figure judged by J.M.W. Bean to be a significant under-assessment.⁷⁴

The 1436 tax records are problematic sources to determine if the county was impoverished. According to Bean, the earl of Northumberland's income appears to have been undervalued and the county assessment implies that fewer taxable charges were applied in Northumberland than elsewhere. Those individuals that were taxed then were almost certainly wealthier than the records indicate. Without taking these factors into account, the records demonstrate there was a significant economic divide between the earl of Northumberland and lesser resident landholders. Yet Northumbrian knights were proportionally wealthier than many of their contemporaries. On the other hand, around two-thirds of the number of exclusive mesne tenants suggested in the assessment of knights' fees in 1428 were not assessed for tax, which suggests that most survived on a modest income. The tendency of tenants-in-chief to exaggerate the extent of war damage adds another layer of complexity to the problem, since their financial situation appeared worse than it was in reality.

⁷⁴ TNA: PRO, E 179/240/269, rot. 16; Bean, *Estates*, pp. 82-83.

3

Marriage and Family

In his study of the Durham region between 1500 and 1640, Mervyn James proposed that a 'lineage society' gave way to a 'civil society'.¹ 'The former was bounded by kinship and ties of the extended family, its socio-economic pattern determined by loyalties which centred on the aristocratic household. In the latter, the family had become more privatized, and loyalties centred more on the state'. James later argued that a 'similar evolution' applied in Northumberland. A letter written in 1523 or thereabouts by Ralph Neville, fourth earl of Westmorland, to the crown supports James's premise. Neville explicitly stated that he could not take up office as warden of the east march because he had neither kith nor kin in that country (Northumberland) nor a place of his own there.² The earl was actually being somewhat economical with the truth since Neville's Northumbrian estate was in the hands of the dowager countess at the time. Nevertheless, that Westmorland was able to justify his refusal on such grounds would seem to indicate a perceived need for a warden to have a local network of relatives to call upon and thus the importance of those ties that bound. This chapter outlines the genealogies of landed society and examines their relationship to one another as a 'county community'.

¹ For this sentence and those that follow see James, *Society, Politics and Culture*, p. 9.

² A. Green and A.J. Pollard, 'Conclusion: Finding North-East England', in idem (eds), *Regional Identities in North-East England; 1300-2000* (Woodbridge: 2007), p. 218.

Marriage was the most significant social attachment that a family could make, uniting husband and wife and thus their respective kin.³ For families of stature, marriage has typically been seen as the principal means of preserving and augmenting their estates. The decision to marry has been regarded as a choice that was made by parents or nominees rather than the couple themselves since newly-weds generally needed financial support to maintain their own household. In a review of what were then recent analyses of fifteenth-century gentry correspondence by J. Gairdner and H. E. Malden, together with her own survey of the Paston letters, Annie Abram outlined the typical impression of medieval marriage as perceived at the beginning of the twentieth century: ‘We cannot help being struck by the extremely business-like view which was taken of marriage; it was an arrangement made in order to obtain material advantages for the contracting parties, but with comparatively little regard to mutual affection or compatibility of temper’.⁴ She also commented upon the particular rights of guardians: ‘the feudal regime placed the wardship and marriage of heirs at the disposal of the superior lord, which made them a matter of sale and bargain, so that “only men of humble birth were at liberty to choose their own wives”’.⁵

Ambitious parents and guardians were seen as cold and indifferent to the marriages of their children and wards, riding roughshod over notions of personal choice,

³ M.J. Bennett, ‘A County Community: Social Cohesion among the Cheshire Gentry, 1400-25’, *NH*, 8 (1973), 28-29.

⁴ A. Abram, *Social England in the Fifteenth Century: A Study of the Effects of Economic Conditions* (London, 1909), p. 170.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 171. The feudal rights of lords are referenced to Pollock and Maitland, *English Law*, vol. 1, 319, but the author evidently disregarded the observation on the same page that the law prevented forced or disparaging marriages.

compatibility, fondness, or love. Yet Abram also acknowledged another side to the letters. The fact that individuals were informed about the appearance and character of prospective partners suggested that they had at least some say in the matter, Margery Brews demonstrated a powerful resolve to marry John Paston III, and an arranged marriage was by no means a bar to love as couples expressed affection for their spouses.⁶

Despite its longevity, Abram's review is germane to modern debate. Keith Dockray brought the Stonor, Paston and Plumpton correspondence to the discussion table during the mid-1980s, arguing that scholars had primarily seen marriage as a vehicle for protection and advancement for far too long.⁷ He noted that the final decision rested with the prospective couple from the twelfth century when the Council of Westminster upheld the validity of marriage between partners over seven years of age without adult agreement.⁸ Moreover, coercion by parents and guardians could easily lay waste to their plans for the future as the application of force provided grounds for an annulment of marriage. In conclusion, Dockray warned that 'historians would be wise not to underestimate the complexity of motives which led to gentry marriages'. Emotional

⁶ Abram, *Social England*, pp. 170-74. Margery Brews sent two valentine messages to John Paston, C. Richmond, *The Paston Family in the Fifteenth Century*, 3 vols (Cambridge and Manchester, 1990-2000), vol. 3, 11.

⁷ K. Dockray, 'Why did Fifteenth-Century English Gentry Marry?: The Pastons, Plumptons and Stonors Reconsidered', in M. Jones (ed.), *Gentry and Lesser Nobility in Late Medieval Europe*, (Gloucester, 1986), pp. 61-80. Also see S.S. Walker, 'Free Consent and the Marriage of Feudal Wards in Medieval England', *JMH*, 8 (1982), 123-34. For a comprehensive study see A. Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love in England: Modes of Reproduction 1300-1840* (Oxford, 1986), esp. ch. III, pp. 119-208.

⁸ However, child marriages under the age of seven were allowed in exceptional circumstances, P. Fleming, *Family and Household in Medieval England* (Basingstoke, 2001), p. 14.

attachments may have been more frequent in marriage-making as Dockray suggests, but the major stumbling block is evidencing it; formulaic legal documents do not lend themselves to terms of endearment.⁹

The marriage of the heir, in which the perpetuation of the family name and its fortunes would be invested, was naturally of considerable importance to parents. Alexander Featherstonhaugh of Featherstone clearly had a strategic rather than a romantic alliance in mind when he entered into a contract with Sir Richard Salkeld of Corby in Cumberland. The text stipulates that should Featherstonhaugh's son and heir, Nicholas, die before his wedding to Salkeld's daughter, Maud, that his younger son and namesake would take his place.¹⁰

Child marriages in particular strongly suggest the controlling hand of adults. In Northumberland, as elsewhere, such instances tended to be driven by the pressures of a minority.¹¹ Following the death of her husband, a widow had no automatic entitlement to the guardianship of the heir, which fell to a feudal overlord.¹² When Alexander Surtees of North Gosforth and Dinsdale died in 1380, his son and heir was just twenty weeks of age.¹³ Thomas Hatfield, bishop of Durham, assumed the marriage and

⁹ Pollard, *North-Eastern England*, p. 108.

¹⁰ *HN*, vol. 2, (3), 354. For similar examples see Fleming, *Family and Household*, p. 34.

¹¹ Wright, *Derbyshire Gentry*, p. 40. To place this subject in context, most medieval marriages were made during teenage years, see Walker, 'Free Consent and the Marriage of Feudal Wards', 125.

¹² S.S. Walker, 'Widow and Ward: the Feudal Law of Child Custody in Medieval England', in S. Mosher Stuard (ed.), *Women in Medieval Society* (Pennsylvania, 1976), pp. 159-72.

¹³ *NCH*, vol. 13, 47. For details concerning the Surtees family also see *The Victoria History of the County of Durham*, ed. W. Page, 3 vols (London, 1968), vol. 3, 218.

wardship of the child and granted the rights to his nephew, a clerk named John Popham. With the boy's prospects in external hands there was a risk that the choice of bride would not match family preferences and it was possible that there would be no union at all until Thomas reached the legal age of consent and consummation recognised as binding by the church, set at fourteen years of age for a boy and twelve for a girl.¹⁴ Sir William Skipworth, Thomas's maternal grandfather, averted the potential crisis by purchasing the rights from Popham the following year. Thomas was married by around the age of ten when he and his wife, a daughter of Sir Ralph Eure, received a grant of lands from feoffees (trustees).¹⁵ The body and lands of Henry Fenwick, son of Alan Fenwick, were similarly placed in another's custody following his father's death. William Folbery initially held the rights but subsequently sold them back to his mother, who in turn granted them to Sir William Leigh of Isel and Blindcrake, Cumberland. Henry's mother was still alive when he married his ward's daughter, Joan, at the age of eight.¹⁶

Though a cursory glance at family histories may suggest that guardians brokered the marriages of their charges, the above examples show that mothers and their kin often recovered the heir and brought the decision back into familial hands. Nevertheless, the low level of annulled marriages suggests that most youngsters acquiesced or were cajoled into acceptance when they reached the age of consent.¹⁷ Margaret, daughter of

¹⁴ N. Orme, *Medieval Children* (London, 2001), p. 336.

¹⁵ *NCH*, vol. 13, 347.

¹⁶ *NCH*, vol. 12, facing 353; *CIPM*, 1422-27, pp. 721-22.

¹⁷ R.H. Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation in Medieval England* (Cambridge, 1974), p. 98.

William Pressen, was one of the few that openly resisted.¹⁸ Her marriage to John Lutre at the age of nine had been *duly* annulled on ‘account of her want of consent when she reached the age of discretion’.¹⁹

Terms of a marriage were recorded in formal contracts but they were underpinned by shared expectations of a gentleman’s qualities and behaviour.²⁰ John Delaval of Newsham, armiger, who negotiated the marriage of his daughter, Elizabeth, to a lawyer, John Horsley, pledged to fulfil his responsibilities toward her ‘onestly acordynge to his degre’.²¹ Sir Robert Ogle (d. 1436) meanwhile demonstrated his integrity by co-opting his brother, Sir John Bertram, to take part in the discussions regarding his daughter, Margery, with Isabel, widow of Robert Harbottle of Preston, and her son, Robert, who had succeeded to his late father’s estates.²² That Ogle involved his brother in this matter is not unusual. Mervyn James noted that honour was not merely an individual possession, but that of the collectivity, the ‘lineage’.²³

¹⁸ For Pressen, see A. King, ‘Scaling the Ladder: The Rise and Rise of the Grays of Heaton, c.1296-c.1415’, in C.D. Liddy and R.H. Britnell (eds.), *North-East England in the Later Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 2005), p. 68.

¹⁹ *Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers Relating to Great Britain and Ireland: Papal Letters 1198-1513*, ed. W.H. Bliss et al., 19 vols (London, 1893-1999), vol. 4, 74. My italics. Cf. *NCH*, vol. 14, 436, which states that Margaret was Lutre’s widow.

²⁰ P. Maddern, ‘Honour among the Pastons: Gender and Integrity in Fifteenth-Century English Provincial Society’, *JMH*, 14 (1988), 357-71; cf. Keen, in Radelescu and Truelove, pp. 44-45. Nevertheless, disputes still arose. For example, see TNA: PRO, Court of Chancery: Six Clerks Office, C 1/6/277; *ibid.*, Court of Common Pleas, CP 40/583, rot. 320.

²¹ Northumberland Archives, Delaval of Seaton Delaval MSS, 1DE/4/2.

²² *NCH*, vol. 9, 267.

²³ James, *Society, Politics and Culture*, p. 325.

An agreement made between Simon Weldon of Weldon and Thornbrough and William Garnet, of whom nothing else is known, for the marriage of their respective children, Thomas and Margaret, represents the most common form of contract for the marriage of an heir to a non-inheriting daughter.²⁴ As the father of the prospective bride, William Garnet was typical in requiring some assurance that the groom's patrimony, the land descending to an eldest son from his father or an ancestor, was safeguarded by a restrictive clause in the contract to prevent Weldon from alienating his estates. Weldon consented to bestow a moiety of the township of Thornburgh in jointure (shared ownership) on the couple and their issue via feoffees. This qualification gave added security to his intended daughter-in-law should his son predecease her, as she would retain the whole of the property in survivorship rather than the common-law dower of a third, and ensure that Thomas's inheritance would pass to his children. The remaining half of Thornburgh was to be leased to Thomas and Margaret, at a cost of five marks a year (equivalent to £3. 6s. 8d.) for the term of his life. Garnet, as usual, agreed to reciprocate with a money portion in lieu of an endowment of land, in this case £40. Not surprisingly perhaps given the substantial outlay - more than twelve times the annual rental of the jointure if we assume parity with the other half of Thornburgh that was to be leased to the couple - he opted to meet the expenditure by instalments over a period of three years and a day from the date of the wedding.²⁵

²⁴ *NCH*, vol. 10, 323-24, where the surname Garnet is queried. For the source material see S.J. Payling, 'The Politics of Family: Late Medieval Marriage Contracts', in R.H. Britnell and A.J. Pollard (eds), *The McFarlane Legacy* (Stroud, 1995), pp. 21-47.

²⁵ Cf. Pollard, *North-Eastern England*, p. 107. The average portion is approximated to be eight to ten times the value of the annual jointure. Unfortunately, remaining settlements do not lend themselves to further analysis of the financial relationship between portion and jointure.

This contract goes some way to correct the idea that parents had their own material interests at heart. Simon Weldon waived his entitlement to the full profits of the marriage as the final instalment of the portion, to the value of £20, was to be made to his son. Garnet agreed to deliver the monetary equivalent to his son-in-law in goods and chattels to furnish his own household. It is only by reading between the lines that we catch a glimpse of Weldon and Garnet's main concern that the partnership would produce a new generation. The schedule for the disbursement of the jointure held more significance than just a method of easy finance; a marriage that had not been consummated after three years of cohabitation could be rendered invalid.²⁶

Adding weight to the family coffers was not the prime consideration in the marriage of Elizabeth Delaval. As sole heiress to an estate, Elizabeth's marriage should have brought the family a considerable jointure in land and a money portion from the groom's family yet the Delavals paid her future husband, James Horsley, £20 for the match.²⁷ The text implies that Elizabeth was probably a minor at the time of her marriage since her father agreed to continue to support her and a maidservant within the family home for another four years. Horsley would not reside with Elizabeth during that time but he would visit. An agreement was made that when he came to stay Elizabeth's father would room and provide for him, his valet, and horse 'att all tymes at his comyng into the countre as long as he will abyde in the houshold'.²⁸ At a later date,

For benchmarks see C. Carpenter 'The Fifteenth-Century English Gentry and their Estates', in M. Jones (ed.), *Gentry and Lesser Nobility in Late Medieval Europe* (Gloucester, 1986), p. 42.

²⁶ Fleming, *Family and Household*, pp. 16-17.

²⁷ Payling, in Britnell and Pollard, *The McFarlane Legacy*, p. 22.

²⁸ I owe this point to Tony Pollard.

when the couple acquired their own residence, Delaval was to supply 'all manner of stuffe of houshold'. Unfortunately, as Horsley's ancestry is vague, the area that he may have considered to be 'his country' is unknown.²⁹

Isabel Harbottle and her son, on the other hand, intended to profit commercially from the land that would come from his wife's family. They agreed to settle paternal lands in Ellingham in jointure. Sir Robert Ogle paid ten gold pounds for the marriage of his daughter to Robert but that was not the full extent of the arrangement. The terms of the marriage were unusual because Ogle agreed to settle land on a non-inheriting daughter.³⁰ The couple were to receive a parcel of land in the field that Ogle owned at Ellingham, near the stream by the church, in order to build a fulling mill on the site together with the right to control the water-course at Paynscroft, located within the same field.³¹ Management of the ditch at Paynscroft was important to the Harbottles' commercial interests as the water could be diverted into another flow that ran towards Robert's existing mill and provide additional power. Ogle also undertook to grant the groom an estate at Newstead until it yielded a profit of fifty marks a year and to maintain his daughter and son-in-law in the same manner as John Delaval, possibly for a period of two years.

²⁹ *NCH*, vol. 9, 148.

³⁰ Cf. the quotation by K.B. McFarlane cited by Payling, in Britnell and Pollard, *The McFarlane Legacy*, p. 27.

³¹ Cf. *NCH*, vol. 2, 244, which interprets the gift as a supplement to the dowry. For the grant see *NDD*, p. 153.

Northumbrian landowners were closely connected by marriage, which predominantly served to reinforce county associations.³² These arrangements were not made specifically for younger children; more than half of all heirs and heiresses, 60 per cent, acquired a spouse whose family also held property within the shire.³³ A comparative figure from Leicestershire is 53 per cent. Partners found outside of the administrative boundary were mainly resident in the northern counties with Yorkshire being the preferred choice.

These findings contrast with Diana Newton's investigation of exogenous marriages made during the early modern era when Northumbrian élites forged more partnerships with their counterparts in Durham than those in Yorkshire.³⁴ This is not, however, a like for like comparison as the question has been approached from different vantage points. In the study of a single administrative unit all landholders are assigned to that particular county as their place of residence, irrespective of any interests that they may have elsewhere. A broader regional survey, however, allocates owners with multiple holdings to the actual county in which they maintained their principal seat. For example, the county model would show the marriage of Sir Robert Claxton of Dilston, Claxton and Haswell to Anne Stapleton of Edenhall as a correlation between Northumberland and Cumberland whereas the regional study would assign Claxton on the basis of his principal property at Claxton and thus record an alliance between

³² This statement is based on a survey of pedigrees from 1408 to 1471 printed in *HN, NCH, NDD* and Hedley, *Northumbrian Families*, vol. 2.

³³ Acheson, *Leicestershire*, p. 156.

³⁴ D. Newton, *North-East England, 1569-1625: Governance, Culture and Identity* (Woodbridge, 2006), p. 26.

Durham and Cumberland. This illustration highlights the major weakness of the county as an analytical tool as it cannot accommodate instances where landholding or other connections existed beyond the limits of the administrative boundary. Consequently, there is a danger of assuming that the county was of greater import to landholders than it was in reality.³⁵

The close relationships that existed amongst landholders can be seen through the marital alliances made by the daughters of Sir Robert Ogle (d. 1469).³⁶ Their unions strengthened links with resident gentry by becoming the wives of sons and heirs of Heron of Ford, Mitford of Molesden in Mitford, Harbottle of Horton, Lilburn of west Lilburn, Lisle of Felton, Manners of Etal, Middleton of Belsay and Whitfield of Whitfield. Ties of kinship were embedded and expanded through each family's own links, which sometimes overlapped. Heron of Ford, for instance, had a number of cadet lines resident within the county. The match of his son, also named Robert (d.1460x1465) to Elizabeth, daughter of Roger Thornton of Newcastle, was also conventional in being centred on a family with influence and wider interests.

Opportunities also existed for leading and wealthy gentry families to attach themselves to the nobility by marriage to younger children, particularly non-inheriting females. For example, Ralph Eure (d. 1461) married Eleanor Greystoke.³⁷ Access to the higher echelons was similarly open. Sir Thomas Grey of Heaton and Wark (d. 1415) married

³⁵ Carpenter, 'Gentry and Community', 348-49.

³⁶ Hedley, *Northumbrian Families*, vol. 2, 154.

³⁷ Pollard, *North-Eastern England*, p. 110.

Alice, daughter of Ralph Neville, earl of Westmorland (d. 1425) from his first marriage, while Gilbert Umfraville, a former ward of the earl, married Elizabeth another daughter.³⁸ Eleanor, heiress of the Newcastle merchant Laurence Acton, became the wife of Ralph Percy (d. 1464), a younger son of the second earl of Northumberland.³⁹ The greatest ascent was made by Thomas Grey (d. bef. 1426), who married Isabel, the only child of Richard of Conisburgh, earl of Cambridge.⁴⁰

The peerage tended to align themselves within their own status group. Thomas lord Dacre (d. 1457/8) and Henry Percy, second earl of Northumberland (d. 1455) were related through their respective marriages to Philippa and Eleanor, daughters of Ralph Neville, first earl of Westmorland.⁴¹ John, lord Latimer, (d. 1430) was the first husband of Maud, sister of John, lord Clifford (d. 1422), whose own wife, Elizabeth, was the second earl of Northumberland's sister.⁴² Following Clifford's death she was partnered with her brother's ward, Ralph Neville (d. 1484), grandson and heir of the first earl of Westmorland. Elizabeth's son by her first husband, Thomas, lord Clifford (d. 1455),

³⁸ A. Tuck 'Neville, Ralph, first Earl of Westmorland (c.1364-1425)', *ODNB*, vol. 40, 520.

³⁹ P.W. Hammond, 'Percy, Sir Ralph (1425-1464)', *ODNB*, vol. 43, 735.

⁴⁰ King, 'Scaling the Ladder', in Liddy and Britnell, *North-East England*, p. 70.

⁴¹ Tuck 'Neville, Ralph', *ODNB*, vol. 40, 520. Philippa was from his first marriage to Margaret Stafford and Eleanor from his second marriage to Joan Beaufort.

⁴² H. Summerson, 'Clifford, Thomas, sixth Baron Clifford (1362/3-1391)', *ODNB*, vol. 12, 113. Latimer and Maud were divorced by 1414 and she married Richard, earl of Cambridge, as her second husband, D. Richardson and K. G. Everingham, *Plantagenet Ancestry: A Study in Colonial and Medieval Families* (Baltimore, Md., 2004), p. 793.

married Joan, daughter of Thomas, lord Dacre.⁴³ Maud, daughter of Ralph lord Greystoke became the wife of lord Eudo Welles.⁴⁴

Primogeniture, the right of the first born son to inherit the family patrimony kept the core of a family's wealth intact but at the expense of younger sons and their descendants. Wealthier families were best placed to make provision for junior males from their estates. At the beginning of the fifteenth century Heron of Ford represented the most widespread grouping of blood kin within the county with cadet lines established at Chipchase, Cornhill, Eshot, Ford, Meldon and Thornton in Northamptonshire.⁴⁵ Sir Robert Ogle (d. 1410) settled the manor of Bothal, part of his mother's inheritance, on his younger son John, much to the vexation of his elder brother.⁴⁶ Sir Robert's son and heir, also named Robert (d.1436), granted the manor of Unthank to his 'lawfully begotten son' John, in May 1436, but failed to make a similar award to his youngest boy, William.⁴⁷ The temptation is to query William's paternity yet Ogle may well have intended to make a similar endowment at a later date but died just two months later. Sir Robert Manners of Etal (d. 1461) granted the manor of Berrington to his younger son Thomas.⁴⁸ The Widdrington family also had a cadet line based at Colwell around this time.⁴⁹ On rare occasions, a younger son benefited from

⁴³ H. Summerson, 'Clifford, Thomas, eighth Baron Clifford (1414-1455)', *ODNB*, vol. 12, 113.

⁴⁴ M. Hicks, 'Welles Leo [Lionel], sixth Baron Welles (c.1406-1461)', *ODNB*, vol. 57, 1003.

⁴⁵ Hedley, *Northumbrian Families*, vol. 2, 43-44, 46; Raine, *North Durham*, p. 304.

⁴⁶ *NDD*, p. 176; Hedley, *Northumbrian Families*, vol. 2, 146, 154.

⁴⁷ *NDD*, p. 189; Hedley, *Northumbrian Families*, vol. 2, 209.

⁴⁸ Hedley, *Northumbrian Families*, vol. 2, 247, 250.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

the generosity of his elder brother when they succeeded to their inheritance.⁵⁰ John Ogle was gifted the manor of North Angerton for life by his elder brother Robert.⁵¹

Some heirs though had a considerable wait before they obtained their full inheritance due to long-lived dowagers, who were not required to surrender their existing rights to jointure or dower upon re-marriage.⁵² Agnes Strother retained lands in jointure for thirty-five years after her husband's death.⁵³ Elizabeth Whitchester outlived her husband by forty-two years.⁵⁴ Joan Goldsburgh kept land in dower for fifty years.⁵⁵ Joan Delaval, whose husband Robert died in 1388, lived on until 1432.⁵⁶ A widow was also entitled to keep property forfeit by her husband for treason if her rights pre-dated his subversion. When Henry, lord Scrope was put to death for his treachery in 1415, his widow, Joan, subsequently petitioned for the recovery of her land that had been detained by the crown.⁵⁷

Evidence of the level of income that fathers gave to younger sons to support themselves relies heavily on testamentary evidence, which as noted earlier is scant, other than that of Edmund Maulever of Ingleby Arncliffe, a landholder in Spindlestone and Budle during the latter half of the fifteenth century, who left each of his boys just 6 marks per

⁵⁰ R.A. Houlbrooke, *The English Family 1450-1750* (Harlow, 1995), p. 41.

⁵¹ *NDD*, p. 178.

⁵² R.E. Archer, 'Rich Old Ladies; The Problem of Late Medieval Dowagers', in A.J. Pollard (ed.), *Property and Politics: Essays in Later Medieval English History* (Gloucester, 1984), pp. 15-35.

⁵³ Roskell et al., *HOC*, vol. 4, 519.

⁵⁴ Lomas, *North-East England*, p. 184.

⁵⁵ *NCH*, vol. 9, 147.

⁵⁶ Lomas, *North-East England*, p. 184.

⁵⁷ *CIPM*, 1413-18, p. 147.

annum on condition.⁵⁸ Margaret Hebburn's bequest in her father's will suggests that daughters fared better in monetary matters. She was to have her fair share of at least £26. 13s. 4d. in cash provided that she married by advice and consent of her family.⁵⁹

Younger sons, such as John Strother, often sustained themselves through trade.⁶⁰ Others pursued a legal career, or gave their service to the church. William, son of Sir William Eure, became a vicar in Leeds.⁶¹ William Heron, son of Sir John Heron of Eshot, was dean of St Paul's.⁶² William Grey, son of Sir Thomas Grey of Heton (d. 1400) by his wife, Joan Mowbray, was successively bishop of London and Lincoln while his nephew, also named William Gray, son of Sir Thomas Grey of Heton (d. 1415) by Alice Neville, became bishop of Ely.⁶³ William Percy, the ninth son of Henry Percy, second earl of Northumberland, and his wife, Eleanor Neville, was bishop of Carlisle.

Deviation from the common law of descent, such as the first earl of Westmorland's deprivation of his rightful heir in favour of his eldest son from his second marriage, was a rare occurrence.⁶⁴ James Delaval should have inherited the estates of his kinwoman Elizabeth Burcester but they had been entailed to John Neville, brother of

⁵⁸ *NCH*, vol. 1, 183; Pollard, *North-Eastern England*, p. 105.

⁵⁹ *Register of Thomas Langley, Bishop of Durham 1406-37*, ed. R.L. Storey, vol. 2, SS, 166 (1951), p. 76.

⁶⁰ A. Tuck, 'Newcastle, Northumberland and the Crown in the Later Middle Ages,' in D. Newton and A.J. Pollard (eds), *Newcastle and Gateshead before 1700* (Chichester, 2009), pp. 125-26.

⁶¹ *NCH*, vol. 12, 495.

⁶² Hedley, *Northumbrian Families*, vol. 2, 79.

⁶³ J. Jones, *Balliol College: A History*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 2005), pp. 35-36.

⁶⁴ Pollard, *North-Eastern England*, p. 100.

Warwick ‘the kingmaker’. Delaval recovered the property a few years later when Neville was killed at the battle of Barnet.

Through the vagaries of fate, some lineages came abruptly to an end. Established names such as Monboucher and Darcy were cut short by failure in the male line. A number continued to live on through a diluted blood line or by adoption. John Ogle, for example, took his father’s maternal grandfather’s surname, Bertram. When Thomas Weetwood succeeded to the barony of Bradford he assumed the toponymic family name and James Horsley accepted his wife’s maiden name, Delaval.⁶⁵

Northumbrians were no different from landed society elsewhere in the way they formed marriage alliances and dealt with the inheritance of property. Marriage contracts have evidenced both sides of the debate. Some material supports the conviction that unions were arranged for the advantage of parents; other documentation suggests not. Landed society was closely connected by blood and marriage. The majority of heirs/heiresses to estates found partners whose families also had holdings in the county, as did those in Leicestershire. Although the peerage tended to marry within their own ranks, these circles were not impermeable.

⁶⁵ *NCH*, vol. 9, 152.

4

Spiritual Kinship

Medievalists have tended to investigate the ties of the extended family through blood connections. Scant attention has been paid to godparenthood, which had social and religious import in binding ‘fleshly and goostly’ relations together as one kindred.¹ This chapter employs crown records to consider the particular arrangement of those bonds.

Forged through the religious rite of baptism, spiritual kinship embraced a voluntary and complex arrangement of ties.² In his *Instructions for Parish Priests*, John Mirk (c.1382-c.1414), canon and later prior of Lilleshall in Shropshire, clarified the matter for celebrants: the child, its parents, the priest, his wife, children and the godparents together with their respective spouses and issue were ‘cosynes’ by baptism.³ A

¹ Quotation cited in *The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, ed. W. W. Skeat, 7 vols (Oxford, 1894-97), vol. 4, ‘The Persones Tale’, 630, line 907.

² For the service see Orme, *Medieval Children*, pp. 21-50. The term is sometimes used more broadly to include sponsorship through confirmation.

³ *John Mirk’s Instructions for Parish Priests*, ed. G. Kristensson (Lund, 1974), p. 77, lines 173-78. However, clerical marriage was forbidden in 1215, see I.S. Robinson, ‘The Institutions of the Church, 1073-1216’, in D.E. Luscombe and J. Riley-Smith (eds.), *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 4, c.1024–c.1198, 2 vols (Cambridge, 2004), vol. 1, 434. A corresponding analysis can be found in *Jacob’s Well: An English Treatise on the Cleansing of a Man’s Conscience*, ed. A. Brandeis (1900), p. 50, lines 8-26. Secondary sources are not entirely consistent on the scope of these associations. For example, the relationship between the godchild, sponsors and their children is discussed by Pollock and Maitland, *English Law*, vol. 2, 389; no reference to the godparents’ children is made by M.J. Bennett, ‘Spiritual Kinship and the Baptismal Name in Traditional European Society’, in L.O. Frappell (ed.), *Principalities, Powers and Estates: Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Government and Society* (Adelaide, 1979), pp. 1-13 and reprinted under the same title in D. Postles and J.T. Rosenthal

maximum of three godparents were permitted under canon law: two women and a man to represent a girl; two men and a woman for a boy. Sponsors renounced the devil and accepted the Christian faith on behalf of the infant but it was the principal godparent who gave the newborn a Christian name, usually their own. Parents would have given much thought to their selection, as would the nominees before giving their consent, since the role carried additional obligations and implications for the future. The service marked the start of a duty of care for godparents who assumed responsibility for the religious education of the child until they reached their seventh birthday and in certain situations they were also expected to protect the physical welfare of their charge, not least from the perils of fire and water.⁴ More importantly, the association created an impediment for the propertied classes. Spiritual relations were subject to the church's rules of affinity, which prohibited wedlock between individuals connected within four degrees of kinship.⁵

John Bossy broke new ground during the 1970s when he outlined the social effects of godparenthood, an area of research that historians were formerly content to leave to

(eds), *Studies on the Personal Name in Later Medieval England and Wales* (Kalamazoo, 2006), pp. 115-46; the godparents' immediate kin are recognised by Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, p. 78.

⁴ R.N. Swanson, *Church and Society in Late Medieval England* (Oxford, 1989), p. 277; B.A. Hanawalt, *The Ties That Bind* (Oxford, 1986), p. 246; W. Coster, 'From Fire and Water': The Responsibilities of Godparents in Early Modern England', in D. Wood (ed.), *The Church and Childhood*, Studies in Church History 31 (Oxford, 1994), pp. 301-2.

⁵ For an explanation of degrees of kinship see Swanson, *Church and Society*, pp. 170-71. For the importance of the bond see *Peter Idley's Instructions to his Son*, ed. C. D'Evelyn (1935), p. 136, lines 1756-62. A rare documented refusal of an invitation by the Yorkshire knight Sir William Tempest on the grounds that godparenthood would prevent a future marriage alliance can be found in *CIPM*, 1422-27, p. 163. Another example is noted by S.S. Walker, 'Proofs of Age of Feudal Heirs in Medieval England', *MS*, 35 (1973), 317.

anthropologists.⁶ Almost a quarter of a century earlier, Mintz and Wolf contemplated the structure of the bond in Latin American cultures and observed that it could be employed to intensify existing ties, by selecting members of the family as godparents, or extend them by choosing people who were not relatives.⁷ Bossy applied the proposition to late medieval Western Europe and concluded that extension was the dominant feature, forming ‘a kinship-group partly natural and partly artificial’ that had little to do with the religious upbringing of a youngster; its main purpose was to ‘create a formal state of friendship between the spiritual and natural kin’.⁸ As the anthropologist Stephen Gudeman pointed out a little later, spiritual kinship was unique because it joined separate households together, rather than individuals, which made it a powerful instrument to achieve social harmony.⁹

In 1979 Michael Bennett undertook a comprehensive review of this theme. Examining the basis of associations, he determined that parents tended to look for sponsors who were known to them, so that ‘often the baptism must be regarded as a sanctification of an old, rather than an initiation of a new relationship’.¹⁰ Even so, parents had the opportunity to exploit a wide range of contacts. Spiritual kinship was an inclusive mechanism with the capacity to breach social barriers such as age, neighbourhood, or

⁶ J. Bossy, ‘Blood and Baptism: Kinship, Community and Christianity in Western Europe from the Fourteenth to the Seventeenth Centuries’, in D. Baker (ed.), *Sanctity and Secularity*, Studies in Church History 10 (Oxford, 1973), pp. 132-35.

⁷ S.W. Mintz and E.R. Wolf, ‘An Analysis of Ritual Co-parenthood’, *South-western Journal of Anthropology*, 6 (1950), 341-68, esp. 355.

⁸ Bossy, in Baker, *Sanctity and Secularity*, pp. 133-34.

⁹ S. Gudeman, ‘Spiritual Relationships and Selecting a Godparent’, *Man*, 10 (1975), 229. Also Bossy, in Baker, *Sanctity and Secularity*, pp. 132-35.

¹⁰ Bennett, in Frappell, *Principalities, Powers and Estates*, p. 3.

rank, and thereby unite ‘the various components of an increasingly differentiated society’.¹¹ Gudeman previously evidenced part of this claim in terms of linkage across social strata. Where a child and godparent were of different status the godparent would generally have a superior position to the child and its parents.¹² Bossy though was not of the same opinion and subsequently argued that parents and godparents were usually of comparable standing, excluding the nobility who sometimes elected poor folk as an act of piety.¹³ General commentators have tended to discount the participation of individuals from the lower orders, placing stress on those of equal or higher status than the family.¹⁴

Bennett hoped that his article would inspire historians to ‘take spiritual kin institutions more seriously’.¹⁵ Very few late medievalists have, despite the opportunities afforded by the subsequent flurry of interest in the gentry and county communities. Nevertheless, these interpretations have been assessed in a small number of local studies that have used testamentary evidence or legal documents known as ‘proofs of age’, located at the TNA within the Inquisitions *Post Mortem* series.¹⁶ As wills made

¹¹ Ibid., p. 4.

¹² Gudeman, ‘Spiritual Relationships’, 235.

¹³ J. Bossy, *Christianity in the West 1400-1700* (Oxford, 1985), p. 16. The practice was also replicated among the wealthy urban élite, see K.A. Lynch, *Individuals, Families, and Communities in Europe 1200-1800* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 72.

¹⁴ For example, see P.J.P. Goldberg, *Medieval England: A Social History, 1250-1550* (London, 2004), p. 28; Houlbrooke, *English Family*, p. 131; K. Mertes, *The English Noble Household, 1250-1600* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 154-55.

¹⁵ Bennett, in Frappell, *Principalities, Powers and Estates*, p. 11.

¹⁶ For research based on testamentary evidence see R. Dinn, ‘Baptism, Spiritual Kinship, and Popular Religion in Bury St. Edmunds’, *BIHR*, 72 (1990), 93-106; R. Lutton, ‘Godparenthood, Kinship and Piety in Tenterden, England 1449-1537’, in I. Davis, M. Müller and S. Rees Jones (eds), *Love, Marriage and Family Ties in the Later Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 2003), pp. 217-34.

by resident Northumbrian landholders are extremely limited during this period, the work based on proofs is pursued here. A sample of thirteen proofs concerning Cheshire landholders scrutinised by Bennett revealed that extension was the common mode. Five out of thirteen fathers acquired godfathers for their children who were of higher status than themselves and thus a potential source of patronage but most 'had to settle for a 'gossip' of roughly equivalent rank'.¹⁷ A prosopographical examination of thirty-eight proofs relating to Yorkshire encompassing male and female godparents conducted by Louis Haas provides a useful basis for comparison given the proximity of the two counties. Once again, extension was the primary force but the majority of godparents were of lower status than the heir. Haas proposed that choosing the 'celibate, related and socially insignificant' as godparents reflected a strategy to prevent restriction of the marriage pool.¹⁸

Historians disagree about the structure of godparenthood and its meaning. According to Bennett, these links held more value among the English rural peasantry than the gentry

For a complete calendared series see 'Proofs of Age of Heirs to Estates in Northumberland in the Reigns of Henry IV, Henry V and Henry VI', ed. J.C. Hodgson, *AA2*, 22 (1900), 116-30 and the continuation paper in *AA2*, 24 (1903), 125-26.

¹⁷ Mintz and Wolf, *South-western Journal of Anthropology*, 6, 348; Bennett, in Frappell, *Principalities, Powers and Estates*, p. 6. The term 'godsib' used to identify a godparent was eventually replaced by 'gossip', which acquired a negative connotation, Orme, *Medieval Children*, p. 25.

¹⁸ L. Haas, 'Social Connections between Parents and Godparents in Late Medieval Yorkshire', *Medieval Prosopography*, 10 (1989), 16 and reprinted under the same title with minor amendments in D. Postles and J.T. Rosenthal (eds), *Studies on the Personal Name in Later Medieval England and Wales* pp. 159-75. An earlier conclusion that godparenthood could be used to create 'alliances with people and groups for whom marriage was inconceivable or undesirable' can be found in Bennett, in Frappell, *Principalities, Powers and Estates*, p. 4. Cf. Hanawalt, *Ties That Bound*, p. 247. The author asserts that close kin were not chosen as godparents. For another challenge to Hanawalt see Lutton, in Davis et al., *Love, Marriage and Family*, p. 225.

or nobility, who had more diverse connections that they could call upon.¹⁹ On the other hand, Barbara Hanawalt has claimed that sponsors were relatively inconsequential in the lives of peasant families and discerned a ‘laxity of feeling’ about the position in general.²⁰ Not all academics have been so dismissive. Rob Lutton’s analysis of Kentish wills made between 1449-1537 has led him to believe that spiritual kinship had a ‘significant correlation to natural kinship to an extent not previously suggested for late medieval England or Europe as a whole’.²¹ The following evaluation of godparenthood in Northumberland makes another contribution to this little-known debate.

Proofs of age were written in specific circumstances; they are solely concerned with the legal right of an individual to succeed as a tenant-in-chief of the crown.²² The procedure was instigated when the heir, or their agent, sued chancery for the release of land from royal control. In response, a writ *de etate probanda* (concerning proof of age) was issued to charge the escheator in the county where the heir was born to hold an inquisition to determine whether the individual had reached the age of majority, set at twenty-one years of age for knights, fourteen for married females of the same class,

¹⁹ Bennett, in Frappell, *Principalities, Powers and Estates*, p. 7.

²⁰ Hanawalt, *Ties That Bound*, pp. 256, 259.

²¹ Lutton, in Davis et al., *Love, Marriage and Family*, p. 233.

²² For the source material see, R.C. Fowler, ‘Legal Proofs of Age’, *EHR*, 22 (1907), 101-3; J. Bedell, ‘Memory and Proof in England 1272-1327’, *P&P*, 162 (1999), 3-27, esp. 6-12; Walker, ‘Feudal Heirs’, 306-23 (based on documentation from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries); Bennett, in Frappell, *Principalities, Powers and Estates*, 1-13. For recent discussions of fifteenth-century proofs, see Carpenter, ‘Introduction’, *CIPM*, 1422-27, pp. 13-16; M. Holford ‘“Testimony (to some extent fictitious)”: Proofs of Age in the First Half of the Fifteenth Century’, *HR*, 82 (2009), 635-54; Hicks (ed.), *The Fifteenth-Century Inquisitions Post Mortem*, passim. Note that proofs were not always required in order for the heir to succeed as a grant by licence of the king sometimes sufficed, for example see *CPR*, 1436-41, p. 230; *ibid.*, 1441-46, p. 354; *ibid.*, 1446-52, p. 333.

or sixteen if unmarried.²³ The escheator was required to conduct an inquisition with the assistance of a jury, empanelled by the sheriff, and verify its findings by return to chancery. The presence of a local jury was designed as an essential part of the inquisition process.²⁴ In an effort to thwart corruption, a statute of 34 Edward III required the findings of an inquisition to be indented. Comprising two copies, the parchment was to be cut along an irregular line, so that the separate parts could be aligned to prove authenticity and mutually sealed: one part remaining with the escheator sealed by the jurors and the part remaining with the jurors sealed by the escheator.

In the absence of an official system of recording births and deaths, the crown relied on living memory via the sworn testimony of local jurors, ‘law-worthy and honest men’ ... ‘by whom the truth may be best known’.²⁵ Occasionally, jurors were of knightly status but more frequently of lower status.²⁶ The panel was questioned about the age of the heir and asked for supporting evidence, to explain *how* they knew that the date they had given was correct. Jurors responded by evoking personal recollections thus generating much incidental material within their depositions. Individuals recounted events that happened on the day of the heir’s birth or baptism and mention was usually made of their godparents.

²³ Walker, ‘Feudal Heirs’, 307.

²⁴ For a discussion of this subject see M. Holford, ‘“Thrifty Men of the Country”? The Jurors and Their Role’, in M. Hicks (ed.), *Fifteenth-Century Inquisitions Post Mortem: A Companion* (Woodbridge, 2012), pp. 202-5.

²⁵ Quotation cited in *ibid.*, p. 202.

²⁶ Carpenter, ‘Introduction’, *CIPM*, 1422-27, p. 17. Cf. Bedell, ‘Memory and Proof’, 15.

Reminiscences tended to follow a standard pattern whereby dates of birth were fixed upon the life-cycle of loved ones; mishaps and disasters; leisure pursuits; religion; business affairs and government.²⁷ Collectively these brief memories provide a snapshot of community life as people went to and fro about their daily affairs. In some instances statements were atypical, a reflection of local conditions. Three jurors at the proof of Margaret Heton of Northumberland, for example, claimed to know the exact date of her birth because each man had encountered an adversary that day. John Witton no doubt recalled with pride how he captured Thomas Turnbull, a Scot, whereas John Horsley remembered the indignity of becoming a prisoner of the Scots, and Robert Horner told of his misfortune in being recognised by a local knight, Sir Thomas Grey, who 'escorted him to Norham castle against his will'.²⁸

Although the reliability of proofs of age has attracted much criticism, particulars regarding godparents have generally been considered to be trustworthy.²⁹ Matthew Holford has recently argued that apparently incidental details were actually drawn from a common store, which makes the use of the proofs of age more challenging, but with some notable exceptions, this does not invalidate the use of them for identifying godparents.³⁰ His research has a direct bearing in highlighting anomalies, amongst

²⁷ For detailed discussion of the content of proofs see J.T. Rosenthal, *Telling Tales: Sources and Narration in Late Medieval England* (Pennsylvania, 2003), pp. 1-62, esp. pp. 26-35. For a criticism of the author's approach see Holford, 'Testimony', 636.

²⁸ John Witton's account, omitted from *CIPM*, 1405-13, pp. 320-21, can be found in 'Proofs of Age', ed. Hodgson, 22, 119-20.

²⁹ Bennett, in Frappell, *Principalities, Powers and Estates*, p. 5; Carpenter, 'Introduction', *CIPM*, 1422-27, p. 36; Haas, 'Social Connections', 8. For the historiography see Rosenthal, *Telling Tales*, pp. xvi, xvii.

³⁰ Holford, 'Testimony', 635-54.

others, concerning proofs of age of heirs to Northumberland estates.³¹ John Ord's proof taken in 1446 by William Jay, mayor and escheator for Newcastle, is for the most part a duplicate of the information given in the Newcastle proof of Robert Gabefore submitted by John Fenwick, escheator for Northumberland, in 1444.³² William Jay did make one deliberate change from the original source in naming Ord's godfathers. This amendment may hold some truth yet the name of his godmother, Joan [Barbour], seems to have been transferred from the earlier record.

Another discrepancy is exposed through the existence of two proofs of age for an individual, Thomas Lumley, which provide contradictory accounts of his date and place of birth, baptism and his godparents.³³ The survival of two records reflects parallel administrative processes in Northumberland and in the bishopric of Durham, which lay outside of the jurisdiction of the crown's officials. In the proof taken on 26 November 1431 by John Cartington, escheator for Northumberland and former knight of the shire, it was said that Thomas Lumley was born at Morpeth on 29 September 1408, baptised the next day in the church of St. Mary, and that Sir Thomas Surtees and Sir Henry Percy of Atholl were his godfathers.³⁴ Conversely, the Durham proof states that Thomas had been born on 21 January 1410 at Little Lumley, baptised that day in the

³¹ Ibid., 653. Also see M.T. Martin, 'Legal Proofs of Age', *EHR*, 22 (1907), 526-27; 'Proofs of Age', ed. Hodgson, 22, 129, fn.21.

³² For Gabefore and Ord see *CCR*, 1441-47, pp. 179, 327 respectively.

³³ Holford, 'Testimony', 650-51.

³⁴ C.H. Hunter Blair, 'Members of Parliament for Northumberland', *AA4*, 12 (1935), 101; *CIPM*, 1427-32, pp. 387-88. 'Proofs of Age', ed. Hodgson, 22, 126, fn.16, which states that Lumley was given livery of his estates in 1430. This statement seems to be erroneous as the writ ordering the release of his lands was issued on 1 January 1432, five weeks or so after the date of the Northumberland inquisition, *CCR*, 1429-35, p. 140.

church at Chester-le-Street, and that his godparents were Thomas Langley, bishop of Durham, William, Lord Hilton, and Isabel, wife of Sir William Claxton.³⁵ Holford detected that the format of the Northumberland document appears to have been copied from the proof of Henry Fenwick, taken in 1426, and reasoned that the Durham version is likely to be more accurate given that Lumley's *caput* was in the palatinate.³⁶

Closer inspection raises further doubt about the integrity of the Northumberland proof. Dated 4 November 1431, the writ *de etate probanda* shows that Sir John Bertram and John Preston, former puisne (junior) justice of the court of common pleas, were to be informed of the forthcoming inquisition since they held custody of Lumley estates outside of Durham.³⁷ John Preston had been granted the family's property in Lancaster and Westmorland soon after John Lumley's death in April 1421 and Sir John Bertram acquired the Northumberland holdings in the following November.³⁸ In his return Cartington verified that both men were present but it seems unlikely that Bertram would have been there. The chancery clerk's understanding of his interest was clearly outdated; letters patent confirming his award had been revoked in January 1424.³⁹ Preston retained possession albeit that his poor stewardship of the manor of Kirby-in-

³⁵ 'Durham Cursitor's Records: Inquisitions Post Mortem', in *The Forty-Fifth Annual Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records* (London, 1885), 232; Liddy, *Bishopric of Durham*, p. 122.

³⁶ Holford, 'Testimony', 651.

³⁷ H. Summerson, 'Preston, John (d. 1434)', *ODNB*, vol. 45, 259. Note that the author associates Preston with the Lumley property in Yorkshire; cf. *CFR*, 1413-22, pp. 392-93.

³⁸ *CPR*, 1413-22, pp. 392-93, 413.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 1422-29, p. 200. William Mayhew, esquire, and William Birkdale, chaplain, had petitioned that John Lumley gifted his Northumbrian estates to them, their heirs and assigns, by charter in April 1418. Bertram failed to attend in chancery to contest the claim. The reason behind the long delay before the claimants raised an objection is not clear. The properties were granted to Birkdale in May 1425, *CFR*, 1422-30, pp. 99-100.

Kendal had come to the attention of the crown.⁴⁰ One may also speculate whether Preston's physical condition was sufficiently robust to allow him to attend the proceedings. His request to retire from public office on the grounds of age and infirmity had been approved almost four years previously in January 1428.⁴¹

Even the most rudimentary elements of proofs may not be as dependable as previously thought but as one of the principal sources for the discussion of godparenthood they cannot easily be cast aside. That said, any assessment of the relationships noted in proofs is hampered by the acute shortage of material, particularly testamentary evidence, to corroborate an association.⁴² In this situation the best that one can do is to test the probability that the testimony is true by taking Bennett's lead and searching for evidence of an existing relationship between parents and godparents, or at least of movement in overlapping circles.

Twenty-two proofs of age conducted for Northumbrian tenants-in-chief were enrolled in chancery between 1401 and 1472.⁴³ Four documents have been excluded: the dubious returns for John Ord and Thomas Lumley discussed above;⁴⁴ that for Sir William Heron, which is no longer extant; and that for John Clifford, which is unusual

⁴⁰ *CPR*, 1429-36, p. 42.

⁴¹ Summerson, 'Preston, John', *ODNB*, vol. 45, 259.

⁴² Holford, 'Testimony', 651.

⁴³ An abstract of the proof of William Heron (originally of Thornton and later of Ford), incorrectly identified in *CIPM*, 1418-22, p. 42 as John Heron and described as badly galled and illegible, has survived in 'Proofs of Age', ed. Hodgson, 22, 122.

⁴⁴ See pp. 103-4 above.

as none of his godparents is recorded.⁴⁵ The proofs of Joan Rutherford (née Heton) and her younger sister Elizabeth were taken simultaneously but have been considered here as separate accounts.⁴⁶ These amendments provide a total of nineteen proofs naming forty-three godparents. Henry Percy, first earl of Northumberland, and Walter Hepscott, abbot of Alnwick abbey, have been double-counted since they each acted on two separate occasions. Only the Hetons appear to have deviated from the usual arrangement in finding more than three godparents. Their daughter Elizabeth apparently had four godparents, two male and two female, whilst the elder daughter, Joan, had two male but no female sponsors. The fact that their inquisitions were held together could well have created some confusion in attributing their respective female godparents but it does seem to point to jurors attaching greater importance on remembering godfathers. As we shall see, it is difficult to judge how complete these accounts are but the total number of godparents is not unrepresentative as the study of Yorkshire proofs produced a similar proportion.⁴⁷

Despite their initial promise, the sources disclose little about the primacy of association. The identity of the principal godparent is obviously of considerable interest as they played a major part during the service and perhaps also within the family's social life. Regrettably, this level of detail is seldom provided so a deduction would have to be made on the premise that the child received their Christian name from the

⁴⁵ *CIPM*, 1418-22, p. xvi (9 Henry V (1421/2), no. 70, recorded as missing in 1828; *ibid.*, 1413-18, p. 323.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 1405-13, pp. 114-15.

⁴⁷ Haas, 'Social Connections', 8. Thirty-eight proofs named ninety-one godparents, an average of 2.39 names per proof. The average for Northumberland equates to 2.26.

principal godparent. However, this reasoning fails because of the inadequacy of the material; as jurors were not asked directly about the number of godparents, nor required to submit all their names, their reports may well fall short of the full complement of sponsors and one cannot be sure that the principal godparent was recorded at all. Even where all the godparents appear to be known the information is not always helpful. Parents quite often sought out individuals with the same name, such as the Carnaby family of Halton, who appointed William Carr and William Lawson.⁴⁸ Moreover, not all parents observed the custom regarding the transmission of names; both of William Bertram's godfathers, for example, were called John.⁴⁹ To add to the complexity the notion that the principal godparent was of the same gender as the infant is by no means certain.⁵⁰ Nicholas Raymes and Mrs Watton are both identified as having raised Nicholas Heron from the font but Mrs Watton was said to have named him. The possibility that she was the key figure should not be dismissed, since a number of inquisition records illustrate exceptions to the rule.⁵¹

Turning to godparents in general, four of the forty-three people chosen were members of the child's family. Three were paternal relatives, thereby strengthening the emotional bond with the newborn and perhaps, at times, quelling potential rivalry.⁵² Edmund

⁴⁸ *CIPM*, 1405-13, p. 364. For other local examples see, *ibid.*, p. 119; pp. 320-21; pp. 365-66; *ibid.*, 1422-27, pp. 378-79; 'Proofs of Age', ed. Hodgson, 22, 127.

⁴⁹ 'Proofs of Age', ed. Hodgson, 24, 127.

⁵⁰ Cf. Bennett, in Frappell, *Principalities, Powers and Estates*, p. 8.

⁵¹ *CIPM*, 1405-13, p. 113. The jurors' statements in this document are noted as illegible, for an earlier account see 'Proofs of Age', ed. Hodgson, 22, 117. For other examples see *CIPM*, 1422-27, pp. 232-34, pp. 235-36, pp. 237-38, pp. 730-31.

⁵² Bennett, in Frappell, *Principalities, Powers and Estates*, p. 6. Note the author's important remark concerning the difficulty in tracing maternal relationships.

Heron, master of Bolton hospital, was ideally suited to support the religious needs of his godson, William Heron (b. 1396/7), and the boy may have been a surrogate for his sponsor in the absence of natural progeny.⁵³ Thomas Surtees accepted an invitation to be godfather to his nephew and namesake, even though the infant had displaced him as his elder brother's heir.⁵⁴ Joan Ogle was a cousin of the baby's father and Elizabeth Monboucher, the only godparent related to a child by marriage, was linked through the maternal line.⁵⁵

The preponderance of tenants-in-chief adhered to the predominant trend, using godparenthood to expand Northumbrian the kinship network. Thirty-nine sponsors represented ecclesiastic and lay society but they were not evenly distributed. The balance was heavily weighted to secular affiliations and no more than one person was chosen from within a household unit, which lends support to Bossy's view that godparenthood was essentially a social function.⁵⁶ Eight clerics were cited and this number owes much to the Hetons of Chillingham, who engaged Walter Hepscoth, abbot of Alnwick abbey, John Bolton, canon of Alnwick, and the prior of Brinkburn to stand

⁵³ 'Proofs of Age', ed. Hodgson, 22, 122; *CPR*, 1388-92, p. 96. Bolton was founded as a leper hospital in 1225, D. Knowles and R.N. Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses in England and Wales* (London, 1953), p. 344.

⁵⁴ For the identification of Thomas Surtees as the child's godfather see 'Proofs of Age', ed. Hodgson, 22, 116-17; *NCH*, vol. 12, 346.

⁵⁵ *CIPM*, 1405-13, pp. 114-15. Styled lady of Horton in the document, Elizabeth was married to Bertram Monboucher III (d. 1399), brother of Isabel Heton.

⁵⁶ Bossy, in Baker, *Sanctity and Secularity*, pp. 133-34. Although a husband and wife could not stand for the same child there was no restriction on one of them acting in conjunction with their offspring and a child's siblings could also act as sponsors, see Orme, *Medieval Children*, p. 25.

as godfather to one of their three daughters.⁵⁷ Members of the clergy were not only chosen because they were close at hand on the relevant day.⁵⁸ William Bertram's godfather, John Ashton, for instance was not assigned to St Andrew's, the local parish church at Bothal; he was the vicar of Ovingham situated on the northern reaches of the river Tyne.⁵⁹

Alliances with the nobility were infrequent and overlaid ties of patronage. Henry Percy, first earl of Northumberland, made a personal commitment to two local families when he acted as godfather to Henry Lilburn (b. 1386/7) and Henry Fenwick (b. 1401). This was not a responsibility undertaken by any other person of similar rank during the period.⁶⁰ The earl was not the only member of the Percy family who was active on Fenwick's behalf: his grandson, Sir Henry Percy of Atholl, was also a sponsor. Lilburn's father, Sir John, attended a special banquet in Alnwick abbey during 1376 held by the abbot in Percy's honour and Henry Fenwick's great-grandfather, Sir Alan Heton, who owned property in Percy's castle at Alnwick, was also a guest.⁶¹ The Lilburns made another upward connection from within the earl's clique, possibly at his

⁵⁷ *CIPM*, 1405-13, pp. 114-15; *ibid.*, pp. 320-21.

⁵⁸ Cf. Haas, 'Social Connections', 14.

⁵⁹ 'Proofs of Age', ed. Hodgson, 24, 127.

⁶⁰ *CIPM*, 1405-13, p. 118; *ibid.*, 1422-27, pp. 738-39. After his father's death, Lilburn became Percy's ward, see *CFR*, 1399-1405, p. 25. However, it should be noted that in a letter to the prior and convent of Durham the second of earl of Northumberland acknowledged Henry, a scholar at Oxford and the son of 'his squire and cousin' William Strother, as his 'sybman', Durham Cathedral Muniments: Locellus, XXV, 164.

⁶¹ Tuck, in Tuck and Goodman, *War and Border Societies*, pp. 180, 186-87. The Alnwick feast was a much larger and socially diverse gathering than this paper suggests, see 'Cronica Monasterii de Alnewyk', ed. W. Dickson, AA1, 3, (1844), 43-45. Some historians have attributed the Fenwick/Percy connection to kinship, identifying Henry Fenwick's mother, Margaret, as a daughter of the first earl of Northumberland, see F.W. Dendy, 'The Heton-Fenwick-Denton Line of Descent', AA3, 14 (1917), 176; C.H. Hunter Blair, 'The Sheriffs of Northumberland: Part 1, 1076-1602', AA4, 20 (1942), 101-2; *NCH*, vol. 12, facing 352.

request, when Katherine, wife of Ralph, lord Greystoke, became their son's godmother.⁶²

There was no partition between greater and lesser gentry, nor indeed, between the gentry and their social inferiors. Nineteen godparents were of equal or like status. Sir Thomas Grey of Heaton and his wife, Joan, selected Thomas Ilderton as a godfather to their son, Thomas (b.1384). Their acquaintance also cut across Northumberland's lordship. Ilderton was present at the abbot's feast during 1376, and he was chancellor and keeper of Berwick under Percy's command, whilst the Greys' heir was born in the middle gatehouse of the earl's castle at Alnwick.⁶³ The other male nominee, Thomas Watton, appears as a feoffee of the Percy manors of Leconfield in Yorkshire and Corbridge in Northumberland, during 1383.⁶⁴ He was briefly involved in local government at a later date and continued to take part in the earl's property matters.⁶⁵

Minor landholders also assumed the task. William Lawson and William Roddam were subsequently appointed as coroners, a position usually filled by parish gentry.⁶⁶ Alice

⁶² Lord Greystoke was a tenant of the Percys and joint warden of the marches with the earl in 1377 and 1380, see Hunter Blair, 'Wardens', 50-52. For the social standing of women see P. Coss, 'An Age of Deference', in R. Horrox and W.M. Ormrod (eds), *A Social History of England, 1200-1500* (Cambridge, 2006), p. 42.

⁶³ *CIPM*, 1405-13, p. 119.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, incorrectly identified as Thomas Waterton; cf. 'Proofs of Age', ed. Hodgson, 22, 119; *CCR*, 1381-85, pp. 403-4; *CPR*, 1381-85, p. 315. This position was often filled by the nobility's most trusted advisors, see Rawcliffe, 'Baronial Councils', in Ross, *Patronage, Pedigree and Power*, p. 100.

⁶⁵ *CPR*, 1388-92, pp. 136, 276, 343; *ibid.*, 1391-96, pp. 94, 292, 437, 729; *ibid.*, 1396-99, pp. 98, 237; *ibid.*, 1399-1401, pp. 213, 358, 509, 562; *CCR*, 1405-09, pp. 135, 476.

⁶⁶ Given-Wilson, *English Nobility*, p. 73. For William Lawson, see *CCR*, 1435-41, p. 224; for William Roddam, see, *ibid.*, 1419-22, p. 99.

Benet, godparent of Thomas Surtees, and her husband were probably in the family's service. She was reported as being at their home when the boy was delivered and six weeks later William Benet took the infant to his wet-nurse in Silton, Yorkshire.⁶⁷ Some sponsors appear to have been long-standing family friends. Thomas Heron, second son of Sir William Heron of Ford, and his wife agreed on Sir Nicholas Raymes when their son was born in 1385/6.⁶⁸ Their fellowship went back over twenty years; William Heron and Nicholas Raymes were caught up in the murder of John de Coupland in 1363.⁶⁹ Other ties were similarly close, such as that of Sir William Bertram and John Carliol of Newcastle, esquire. Their association was perhaps not quite as long-lived as that of Heron and Raymes but both men moved in the Percy circle during the 1440s and 1450s.⁷⁰

Attachments were also made with the kinfolk of prominent men. Agnes Rhodes, godmother to William Bertram, was the second wife of Robert Rhodes, who maintained a long and successful administrative career in both Northumberland and Newcastle, provided legal counsel to the prior and convent of Durham and acted as steward of the duke of Bedford's estates in Northumberland.⁷¹ John Rhodes, esquire,

⁶⁷ *CIPM*, 1422-27, pp. 387-88.

⁶⁸ 'Proofs of Age', ed. Hodgson, 22, 117.

⁶⁹ King, thesis, pp. 137-38, 142, 203-4.

⁷⁰ Bean, *Estates*, pp. 92, 97; Griffiths, 'Local Rivalries', 604. Carlisle (Carliol) became mayor of Newcastle in 1450 and was slain at Towton in 1471, C.H. Hunter Blair, 'The Mayors and Lord Mayors of Newcastle upon Tyne, 1216-1940 and the Sheriffs of the County of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1399-1940', *AA4*, 18 (1941), 19.

⁷¹ Agnes had Northumbrian roots. She was the daughter of John Hebburn and Agnes Carnaby, and the widow of John Strother of Wallington, see Roskell et al., *HOC*, vol. 3, 339-41; C.H. Hunter Blair, 'Members of Parliament for Newcastle upon Tyne', *AA4*, 14 (1937), 44-48; Robert's marriage to Agnes, stated here as occurring sometime before 1459, had evidently

was probably his brother. He was sheriff of Newcastle in 1417 and godfather to Robert Gabefore in 1422.⁷² Elizabeth Heron was the wife of William Heron of Ford.⁷³ Elizabeth Strother was a daughter of the late Alan Strother, one-time sheriff of Northumberland, and Margaret Fox was probably a relative of John Fox, a commissioner for Northumberland around this date.⁷⁴ Gilbert Acton was a kinsman of Lawrence Acton II; John Claxton of Hulam was a younger brother of Sir Robert Claxton of Dilston, Claxton and Horden.⁷⁵ Four godmothers could not be traced but their surnames suggest strong local connections.⁷⁶ Making a distinction between sponsors chosen from senior or cadet lines of a family is less straightforward than it seems since godparenthood pervaded relationships by marriage and by blood. Papal registers confirm Helmholz's judgement that spiritual ties included the godparents'

taken place prior to William's birth on 24 November 1449. For his involvement in the property affairs of William's father, Sir John Bertram in 1436, see *CPR*, 1429-36, p. 595. For additional references see *ibid.*, pp. 328, 356, 426, 470, 500, 531; *ibid.*, 1436-41, pp. 201, 476, 508, 588, *ibid.*, 1441-46, pp. 72, 270, 331; *ibid.*, 1452-61, p. 407; *ibid.*, 1461-67, p. 304, 336; R.B. Dobson, *Durham Priory, 1400-1450* (Cambridge, 1973), pp. 44-45, 129-31. For the social standing of the civic élite see R.E. Horrox, 'The Urban Gentry in the Fifteenth Century', in J.A.F. Thomson (ed.), *Towns and Townspeople in the Fifteenth Century* (Gloucester, 1988), pp. 22-44.

⁷² Hunter Blair, 'Mayors and Lord Mayors of Newcastle', 13. For Gabefore's subsequent appointments see *ibid.*, 14.

⁷³ Holford and Stringer, *Border Liberties and Loyalties*, p. 408.

⁷⁴ 'Proofs of Age', ed. Hodgson, 24, 127; Hunter Blair, 'Sheriffs of Northumberland', 49; *CPR*, 1391-96, p. 353. For other references to Fox, including his appointment as esquire to Henry IV, see *CPR*, 1388-92, p. 518; *ibid.*, 1399-1401, p. 359; *ibid.*, 1405-08, pp. 45, 124; *ibid.*, 1408-13, pp. 173, 176, 180, 223; *ibid.*, 1413-16, p. 22; *ibid.*, 1422-29, p. 78; TNA: PRO, Court of Chancery, C 1/5/116; *ibid.*, Special Collections: Ancient Petitions, SC 8/254/12668, SC 8/311/15551; *NCH*, vol. 14, 242.

⁷⁵ CIPM, 1405-13, pp. 365-66; Hedley, *Northumbrian Families*, vol. 1, 33; 'Proofs of Age', ed. Hodgson, 22, 129-30 (Edmund Hastings); B.A. Barker, Law and Disorder in the Medieval North East: The Claxtons and the Barony of Dilston in Northumberland, 1373-1441, Paper in North Eastern History (Middlesbrough, 2007), 36.

⁷⁶ Elizabeth Fenwick (wife of Roger), Katherine Heron, who may possibly have been the wife of John Heron of Thornton, see *CCR*, 1409-13, p. 276, or Nicholas Heron, see Hedley, *Northumbrian Families*, vol. 2, 71, and Alice Ogle. Mrs Watton, godmother of Nicholas Heron, may have been the wife of Thomas Watton noted above or possibly his sister-in-law.

immediate kin.⁷⁷ William Wall and Agnes Lussell of the diocese of Lincoln obtained a dispensation to remain in marriage on the grounds that they were ignorant that William's *brother* had been godfather to Agnes.⁷⁸ The archives also shed light on another layer of associations, not previously acknowledged, involving the godchild's extended kin. In May 1460 Walter Suiting and Maud, widow of John Perett, both of the diocese of Exeter, were granted a dispensation to marry notwithstanding the fact that Walter's late wife, Christiana, had been godmother to a *nephew* of the said Maud.⁷⁹

Five sponsors (and any known relatives) appear to have been of a lower social status than the parents themselves.⁸⁰ A few may have been members of the tenantry, such as Margaret Scriven, who carried the surname of the family that rented property in Ingram from the Hetons during the fourteenth century.⁸¹ The remaining four godparents are more obscure characters whose identity is limited to their name.⁸²

The neighbourhood held particular import in the selection of extended kinfolk. Concern that an infant might die in a state of original sin meant that a baptism would usually

⁷⁷ Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, p. 78.

⁷⁸ *Papal Letters*, vol. 11, 57-58. My italics.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 570. My italics.

⁸⁰ This statement is based on the absence of their names or potential paternal kin in any of the sources employed in this study. This search was constrained by the fact that affinal links could not be identified unless evidence of the relationship was documented.

⁸¹ King, thesis, p. 159, fn.174.

⁸² John Hall for John Hebburn; Thomas Dunker for Thomas Heselrigg; Roger Gibson for Elizabeth Johnson (née Heton); Alan Hindmarsh for Joan Rutherford (née Heton).

take place as soon as possible after birth, often on the same day.⁸³ Conveying news of the arrival was much easier if godparents were in easy reach, such as Sir Nicholas Raymes of Shortflatt who was located within five miles of Thomas Heron's *caput* at Meldon. More frequently, parents set their sights on sponsors who lived within a six to fifteen-mile radius of their main Northumbrian residence and even in this sparsely populated shire appointments were generally limited to within a range of twenty miles.⁸⁴ It was the substantial gentry families of Grey, Fenwick, Lilburn and Heton that called upon more extensive county connections beyond this distance but only three sets of parents had associations that traversed the Coquet. Two of these families reached out to sponsors residing beyond the county. As noted earlier, both of John Bertram's godparents were closely linked with Newcastle. The Umfravilles, though, were extraordinary in acquiring a godparent from the Scottish borderlands. Gilbert, abbot of the Cistercian abbey at Melrose, made a journey south across the international frontier to Harbottle castle to sponsor Umfraville's son and his namesake during October 1390.⁸⁵

Abbot Gilbert was permitted to travel in northern England by royal licence. A three-year truce had been agreed by the English and Scots in autumn 1398 and on 18 October Richard II granted letters of protection to Melrose for the duration of the armistice; ostensibly one of the concessions made in reparation for burning the abbey during his

⁸³ Orme, *Medieval Children*, p. 25. Some expectant mothers may well have borrowed St Margaret's cross, a relic owned by Durham Priory, that was believed to ensure a safe delivery, M.E. Fissell, *Vernacular Bodies* (Oxford, 2004), p. 15.

⁸⁴ A wider field of social interaction than that suggested by P. Coss, *The Origins of the English Gentry* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 205-6.

⁸⁵ *CIPM*, 1405-13, pp. 365-66.

expedition to Scotland in 1385.⁸⁶ It was probably during 1389/90 that he and Sir Thomas Umfraville became acquainted. Umfraville acted as envoy in negotiations with the Scots over violations of the truce and Melrose was one of the designated sites for discussions.⁸⁷ The abbot's presence at Harbottle, though, clearly went beyond the terms of the warrant that allowed him passage within Northumberland and Cumberland for the purpose of trade.⁸⁸ Neither the exceptional powers of the king nor those of the head of the church could prevent Gilbert from making up his own mind in this particular matter. Monks were expressly prohibited from standing as godparents by papal decree.⁸⁹

But the neighbourhood is a relative concept since prospective parents could decide where they would like the child to be born and realign their social networks. Some four to six weeks before the expected birth, pregnant women withdrew from the company of men and, aided by female attendants, retired to their chambers for a period of confinement, which lasted for forty days following the birth when they were purified

⁸⁶ Neville, *Violence, Custom and Law*, p. 74; R.D. Oram, 'Dividing the Spoils: War, Schism and Religious Patronage on the Anglo-Scottish Border, c.1332–c.1400', in A. King and M.A. Penman (eds), *England and Scotland in the Fourteenth Century* (Woodbridge, 2007), pp. 148–51; *CDRS*, vol. 4, 88.

⁸⁷ Roskell et al., *HOC*, vol. 4, 687–88; Neville, *Violence, Custom and Law*, p. 74.

⁸⁸ Although the truce prohibited communing between Scots and English other than in trade, Richard II granted licences for a variety of other purposes, including access to education, competing in feats of arms and to advance legal proceedings. For example see *CDRS*, vol. 4, 86, 90, 92, 94, 98.

⁸⁹ Bennett, in Frappell, *Principalities, Powers and Estates*, p. 3. The abbot and canons of Alnwick and prior of Brinkburn were not in violation of the edict, since as canons regular they were engaged in public ministry.

through the ritual of 'churcing'.⁹⁰ Some expectant mothers, however, were not resident at their main Northumberland property when the child was born but had moved to other places. The locations that they moved to reflect two principal centres, one within the county and one without (Map 7). During the tenure of the first and second earls of Northumberland, Alnwick and its hinterland represented the hub for the Fenwick, Grey, Heron and Lilburn women.⁹¹ Lady Grey left her home at Wark-on-Tweed, west of the river Till, to stay at Alnwick castle. Downstream from the Greys, Margaret Lilburn of Lilburn left for another family home at Shawdon, approximately six miles west of Alnwick. Elizabeth Fenwick made a much longer journey that reversed the trend, travelling from Fenwick Tower in the opposite direction northward to Alnwick. Much later, following the restoration of the second earl of Northumberland in 1416, the wife of John Heron of Ford, based on the eastern bank of the Till, settled at Whittingham by the Aln.

For others, Newcastle provided the focal point. Sons of Hebburn of Newton-by-the Sea, Weetwood, who held Bradford in Bamburghshire, together with Mitford of Molesden

⁹⁰ R. Virgoe, *Private Life in the Fifteenth Century: Illustrated Letters of the Paston Family* (London, 1989), p. 225; P.J.P. Goldberg, 'Life and Death: The Ages of Man', in R. Horrox and W.M. Ormrod (eds), *A Social History of England* (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 414-16. Note that the period of segregation after the birth is given here as a month rather than forty days and Goldberg has some reservation about the extent to which segregation was rigorously applied. For a discussion of this subject in relation to the nobility see B.J. Harris, *Aristocratic Women, 1450-1550* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 99-107. For the ritual of churcing see A. Vauchez, R.B. Dobson and M. Lapidge (eds), *Encyclopaedia of the Middle Ages*, 2 vols (Cambridge, 2000), vol. 1, 306.

⁹¹ Although the chronology suggests a cluster around Alnwick between 1386-1401 and Newcastle between 1402-23, it should be noted that in the later phase families had a connection with the town or tended to be less significant figures.



in Mitford, situated on the north side of the Wansbeck, and Gabefore, landholders in Cramlington, south of the River Blyth, were all delivered in this urban setting.⁹² Most owned property, pursued commercial interests and served in public office in the town.⁹³ It has been suggested that at least one family positioned themselves in the town for their own safety. Anthony Goodman has attributed the Mitfords' move from their home at Mitford to another house in St John's Chare as an avoidance strategy in light of an impending Scottish attack.⁹⁴ Following the same line of thought but with a more inclusive outlook, it could be that those with isolated rural estates experienced a greater level of anxiety about the forthcoming birth and preferred to stay in their townhouses because of the greater availability of midwives.⁹⁵ For these expectant mothers access to healthcare may well have made Newcastle a more 'habitable country' than Northumberland but it is not an indicator that the county was less civilized than other parts of the realm. It was only in large towns, with a high concentration of births, that professional midwives could make a living.⁹⁶ But if the choice of godparents is indicative of a sense of belonging, then it was probably Newcastle, rather than

⁹² *CIPM*, 1422-27, pp. 324-25; 'Proofs of Age', ed. Hodgson, 22, 122-23, 126-29.

⁹³ For Hebburn see Roskell et al., *HOC*, vol. 3, 339-42; Hunter Blair, 'Mayors and Lord Mayors of Newcastle', 11. For Gabefore, see 'Proofs of Age', ed. Hodgson, 22, 128, fn.20; Northumberland Archives, Swinburne (Capheaton) Estate Records, ZSW/1/124, ZSW/2/43. For Mitford see Roskell et al., *HOC*, vol. 3, 746-47; Tuck, in Newton and Pollard, *Newcastle and Gateshead before 1700*, pp. 128-29.

⁹⁴ A. Goodman, 'The Church and Religion in Newcastle, 1080-1540', in D. Newton and A. J. Pollard (eds), *Newcastle and Gateshead before 1700* (Chichester, 2009), p. 109; 'Proofs of Age', ed. Hodgson, 22, 122-23. For the location of the Mitford's property see Bourne, *History of Newcastle*, p. 52.

⁹⁵ I owe this point to Tony Pollard. William Carnaby's mother was reported as 'being in great danger of death' on the day that he was born, *CIPM*, 1405-13, p. 364.

⁹⁶ Goldberg, 'Life and Death', in Horrox and Ormrod, *Social History of England*, p. 41.

Northumberland, that mattered most. All of the sponsors, apart from the selection made by the Mitfords, appear to have resided in the vicinity.⁹⁷

Thomas Surtees and Edmund Hastings were born south of the Tyne in the palatinate of Durham.⁹⁸ Their sponsors mirrored the family's ownership of estates both north and south of the river. The Surtees family of Dinsdale selected Alexander's younger brother, Thomas, as godparent to their son and Alice Benet, whose husband, William, held the manor of Kenton in Northumberland, near their own estate of North Gosforth.⁹⁹ The knightly Hastings family held the manors of Hamsterley Hall and Medomsley in Durham but Edmund was actually born at nearby Brancepeth, a seat of Ralph Neville, second earl of Westmorland.¹⁰⁰ John Claxton of Hulam, whose brother Robert possessed Newlands and Whittonstall in Northumberland within five miles of Medomsley, stood for Edmund alongside Sir William Elmden of Trilleseden (now Tursdale), who also had property in Newcastle and Embleton, around thirteen miles from their Northumberland home at Edlingham.¹⁰¹

Jurors concentrated on stating who an infant's godparents were, not why they were chosen, but one or two examples may be cited where the choice of sponsor appears to

⁹⁷ *CIPM*, 1422-27, pp. 324-25.

⁹⁸ 'Proofs of Age', ed. Hodgson, 22, 129-30.

⁹⁹ William Benet acquired possession of the manor of Kenton before his mother's death in March 1420, see *CIPM*, 1418-22, p. 166.

¹⁰⁰ Roskell et al., *HOC*, vol. 3, 317.

¹⁰¹ J.S. Roskell, *The Commons in the Parliament of 1422: English Society and Parliamentary Representation under the Lancastrians* (Manchester, 1954), pp. 175-76; Hunter Blair, 'MPs for Northumberland', 97; Liddy, *Bishopric of Durham*, p. 211, referred to here as Sir William Embleton; Dobson, *Durham Priory*, p. 193.

have been designed to ease local tension. Churches were often used as a venue for ‘lovedays’, where dissenting parties met in search of an amicable resolution to their differences.¹⁰² Baptism provided a new beginning for a child and an opportunity for its parents to start afresh and to restore relationships that had become unstable or broken down.¹⁰³ Joan Ogle’s agreement to stand as godmother to one of Sir Henry Heton’s daughters was a positive move forward given their history of family squabbles. She was the eldest daughter of Sir Alan Heton and Sir Henry’s cousin. Henry and his father, Thomas, an illegitimate brother of Sir Alan, had been embroiled in a prolonged wrangle over the ownership of Chillingham.¹⁰⁴ Following Sir Alan’s death in 1388, his three daughters and their husbands carried on the dispute. Henry Bolingbroke appears to have arbitrated a compromise between the warring parties sometime before November 1389 after receiving a letter from members of Alan’s family, who were retainers of his father, John of Gaunt.¹⁰⁵ Henry’s invitation to Joan to stand as godmother and her consent appears to be a public display marking the cessation of hostilities.¹⁰⁶

On another occasion, parental choice was influenced by a desire to heal a rift that affected a close member of the family. The disagreement between William Mitford’s grandfather, Sir Robert Lisle, and Sir John Widdrington, his other male sponsor, was

¹⁰² J.W. Bennett, ‘The Mediaeval Loveday’, *Speculum*, 33 (1958), 351-70, esp. 361.

¹⁰³ S. Gudeman, ‘The *Compadrazgo* as a Reflection of the Natural and Spiritual Person’, *Proceedings of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* (1972), 45-67, esp. 59-65; idem, ‘Spiritual Relationships’, 229.

¹⁰⁴ *CIPM*, 1405-13, pp. 320-21. For the Heton conflict and details that follow see King, thesis, pp. 144-53.

¹⁰⁵ *CIPM*, 1405-13, p. 150. The letter was written by Heton’s sons-in-law, William Swinburne and John Fenwick.

¹⁰⁶ Joan Ogle was actually recorded as a godmother of Elizabeth Heton but the chronology here suggests that she probably stood for her elder sister, Joan, born on 1 August 1389.

settled in the church of St Nicholas in Newcastle on the day that he was baptized.¹⁰⁷ John Brown, a juror at his proof of age, remembered Widdrington and Lisle ‘treating together in the said church for agreement concerning matters in dispute between them, of which agreement an indenture was made, dated the same day, and delivered to him to keep’. Widdrington evidently put the past aside and promptly assumed his new duty. When the chaplain, Thomas Galon, inadvertently dropped the infant in the font, Widdrington swiftly admonished him, ‘Prest, prest, fond be thi hened’. Sir John, like other godparents, expected to safeguard the child from danger but probably not quite so soon.¹⁰⁸

Kinship encompassed the ties of blood and marriage but it was also a grouping that other people were admitted to by invitation. In Northumberland, the largely horizontal ties of blood and marriage were further extended through spiritual alliances in the choice of sponsors of equal or like status, who generally resided locally within the county boundary. Parents were not unusual in their choice of alignment, which parallels the findings from Cheshire. Taking a broader perspective, proofs of age illustrate aspects of gentry culture that have been well-documented elsewhere. Rural and urban worlds, for example, did not operate in isolation.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ ‘Proofs of Age’, ed. Hodgson, 22, 122-23; *CIPM*, 1422-27, pp. 324-25. For another local example see *ibid.*, 22, 122 (Heron).

¹⁰⁸ Orme, *Medieval Children*, p. 29.

¹⁰⁹ For example, Horrox, in Thomson, *Towns and Townspeople*, pp. 22-44; P. Nightingale, ‘Knights and Merchants: Trade, Politics and the Gentry in Late Medieval England’, *P&P*, 169 (2000), 36-62.

5

Witnessing and Dispute Resolution

In the same way that jurors were required by the crown to conduct proofs of age, the assistance of others was needed to deal with a variety of private concerns. Philippa Maddern has argued that when dealing with property matters the gentry looked for mutual support from their friends, people with whom they were on good terms and believed they could trust.¹ A typology has been suggested by Gerald Harriss, whereby friends and neighbours served as witnesses or feoffees whilst the services of those with legal training and neighbours of equivalent standing were sought-after in the conveyance of property; immediate kin acted in family settlements and as executors of estates and lords supervised wills.² The support of others was also useful in the settlement of minor and more serious disagreements. This chapter analyses the social networks of landed society within the above contexts.

Delineating social networks is a relatively straightforward task; the problem lies in the limitation of the sources and interpreting their personal significance.³ The solid lines drawn on family pedigrees suggest closeness and constancy yet family relationships then were probably no different from those now: largely fulfilling, at times, perhaps, a

¹ P. Maddern, “‘Best Trusted Friends’: Concepts and Practices of Friendship among Fifteenth Century Norfolk Gentry”, in N. Rogers (ed.), *England in the Fifteenth Century* (Stamford, 1994), p. 108.

² Harriss, *Shaping the Nation*, p. 188. Cf. P. Maddern, ‘Friends of the Dead: Executors, Wills and Family Strategy in Fifteenth-Century Norfolk’, in R.E. Archer and S. Walker (eds), *Rulers and Ruled in Late Medieval England* (London, 1995), pp. 155-74.

³ Carpenter, ‘The Stonor Circle’, in Archer and Walker, *Rulers and Ruled*, p. 176.

little fraught and in some circumstances a tie that exists in name only. The term 'friends' has a sufficiently wide sweep to take in colleagues, supporters and associates of various kinds. Despite the benefit of comprehensive modern biographies it is impossible to know how a particular individual felt about the people they interacted with or why they did so.⁴ And what of the nearest friendships? Who met socially and were invited to share the intimacy of a family home? How exactly 'friends were made and sustained' is extremely difficult to establish.⁵ The sources prove inadequate to reveal much more than superficial connections.

In the absence of a land registry, claims to title were often contested, so acquiring the support of people with status and authority was a major concern, even where the transaction was not particularly sizeable. The witnessing of deeds was largely a preserve of resident gentry. Landholders with significant interests outside the county such as Acton, Claxton, Eure, Hastings and Thornton played little or no part in these everyday communal events.⁶ As four or five people generally attested a charter, calls for help came frequently. The services of Sir John Bertram and Sir John Widdrington were highly sought after. Both men attested documents for the Ogle family, who were Bertram's blood relatives, Claxton, Cartington and Cresswell, but they were also active independently for comparable and lesser families.

⁴ J.D. Marshall, *The Tyranny of the Discrete: A Discussion of the Problems of Local History in England* (Aldershot, 1997), p. 73.

⁵ Cf. Maddern, 'Best Trusted Friends', in Rogers, *The Fifteenth Century*, p. 101.

⁶ Any involvement tended to be for a kinsman or for one another. Roger Thornton II acted for Edmund Hastings and his father-in-law, lord Ogle. William Eure confirmed a grant to his brother, Robert, and others from Sir Robert Claxton. For details of the Claxton/Eure relationship in Durham see B.A. Barker, 'The Claxtons: A North-Eastern Gentry Family in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries', (unpub. Ph.D. thesis, Univ. Teesside, 2003), pp. 131-37.

Most witnesses were indeed friends and neighbours.⁷ During the spring of 1454 John Burrell of Howtel recruited Sir Ralph Grey, John Heron, Thomas Grey, Robert Manners and Thomas Strother, who all had property less than six miles away, to observe the grant of a husbandland to his son.⁸ Robert Umfraville, lord of Redesdale, Thomas Bickerton, and Hugh Galon of Low Trewhitt covered no more than this distance in May 1410 when they verified the transfer of a tenement in Little Tosson, near Rothbury, from Margery Ryle to William Harbottle of Durham.⁹ In 1408/9 when Thomas Herrington conveyed various holdings, situated in Northumberland, Redesdale and Newcastle, he gathered residents from all of these areas to act as witnesses.¹⁰

But not all business was conveniently conducted on the gentry's doorstep, occasionally some took place outside the county. It was surely because of Edmund Hastings' age that his witnesses were willing to make the journey to his principal residence in Roxby, Yorkshire, during 1445. Sir Robert Ogle, Roger Thornton, Robert Clavering, Robert

⁷ As noted by Acheson, *Leicestershire*, p. 86; Payling, *Political Society*, p. 85. Wright, *Derbyshire Gentry*, p. 56.

⁸ Northumberland Archives, Waterford. Ch. 23 (from extract, original listed as missing); *NCH*, vol. 11, 200.

⁹ 'North Country Deeds', ed. W. Brown, *Miscellanea II*, SS, 155 (1916), p. 120; Roskell et al., *HOC*, vol. 3, 287. William was the son of Robert Harbottle of Chilton and a kinsman of Robert Harbottle of Preston. Umfraville was not the feudal lord of Tosson, the township was part of the manor of Hepple held by the Ogles, see *NCH*, vol. 15, 380. Galon was mentioned at Gilbert Umfraville's proof as meeting Elizabeth Heron, the boy's godmother, at Rothbury, and was probably in the family's service, 'Proofs of Age', ed. Hodgson, 22, 121.

¹⁰ Durham Record Office, Strathmore Estate, D/St/D10/11; *HN*, vol. 2 (1), 136 and 170, where it is incorrectly dated.

Edlingham and Edmund Aleyr, esquire, confirmed the enfeoffment of the bulk of his Northumbrian estates as a means to protect his young heir's inheritance.¹¹

The Harbottle deeds provide the most comprehensive list of witnesses and illustrate elements of continuity through generations of the family that do not emerge in more fragmented archives. Thirty-one people were involved in their property dealings between 1407 and 1439. During the lifetime of Robert Harbottle (d. 1419) nineteen men came forward reflecting a blend of kin, neighbours, friends and colleagues. Thomas Lilburn was a relative through his marriage to Harbottle's step-daughter, Joan.¹² Presumably, William Lilburn, who acted on his behalf in 1407 along with Edmund Craster and others, was his kinsman. Robert Doxford, Robert Hoppen and Adomar Harang resided within seven miles of his lands in Preston, whilst William Roddam, William Heron and William Strother were based within seven miles of his home at Horton. It was probably through his post as steward of Dunstanburgh that he called upon William Swan, the receiver there in 1406 and Edward, brother of Richard Wetwang, who became Swan's successor.¹³ Harbottle's contacts also included knights who were based further south in the county, Sir John Widdrington, Sir Robert Ogle (d. 1436) and Sir John Middleton (d. 1441). Widdrington's presence may be due to friendship with Ogle but he was also related by marriage to the Lilburns. His daughter Agnes was the widow of Henry Lilburn, elder brother of Thomas.

¹¹ Northumberland Archives, ZSW/3/16. Hastings was then around seventy-five years of age, Roskell et al., *HOC*, vol. 2, 319.

¹² *NCH*, vol. 14, 436.

¹³ Somerville, *Duchy of Lancaster*, vol. 1, 538; *CPR*, 1401-05, p. 365; *NDD*, pp. 152, 157.

Harbottle's heir, also named Robert, attracted some new faces. Sir William Elmden and Thomas Grey witnessed the transfer of property that came as part of his marriage settlement to Sir Robert Ogle's daughter, Margery.¹⁴ A release to farm of property in Newcastle was endorsed by the urban oligarchy: the mayor, Lawrence Acton, the sheriff, Edward Bertram and four burgesses.¹⁵ The grant of the manor of Preston to his son, Bertram and his wife Joan, was authenticated by her kinsman Sir William Lumley, and John Swinhow.¹⁶ Robert developed his own clique but he continued to rely upon members of his family, the Lilburns, and his close neighbours, the Crasters and Herons, who came to his side, just as they had for his father.

Stronger relationships may perhaps be discerned where the gentry gave others power of attorney to act on their behalf in relinquishing or taking seisin (possession) of land. References are scant, which implies that landholders preferred to deal with these matters personally. When responsibility was delegated to another, it was usually to give land rather than receive it, the latter being an exceptional charge.¹⁷ As a precautionary measure, this duty was shared and commonly involved four people. Relatives and the clergy were a logical choice.¹⁸ The Ogles, who issued most letters of attorney, assigned William Bertram, Robert Manners and Thomas Taylor, chaplain, the task. Gerard Heron of Chipchase transferred lands to his elder brother and Roger Thornton II

¹⁴ *NDD*, p. 153.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 158-59.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 120; *HN*, vol. 2 (1), 386.

¹⁸ The vocation of the clergy made them a popular choice in such matters, Pollard, *North-Eastern England*, pp. 111-12; Family chaplains were often party to deeds and settlements, Wright, *Derbyshire Gentry*, p. 53; A composition also observed by Acheson, *Leicestershire*, p. 81.

empowered his cousin, Gerard Mitford of Stanton, to take ownership of holdings in three counties from his father.¹⁹

The roles of witness and attorney were not necessarily distinct. William Ord, for example, enlisted Robert Doxford, who attested his grant made earlier that same day.²⁰

The Swinhow family of Rock also used their local friends, Thomas Bradford, Nicholas Blaxton, Robert Hoppen, Edmund Craster and Thomas Ilderton, to perform a variety of functions when they made a series of enfeoffments late in 1469.²¹ A number of people granted power of attorney, however, were not members of the family nor witnesses to their deeds. They represented men of equal or lower status than themselves, who lived nearby. The Swinburnes of Capheaton looked to Gilbert and Richard Errington of Errington.²² Roger Thornton II engaged the services of William Hutton, esquire, to assist his cousin, Gerard Mitford, to give seisin of properties to his son?²³ In 1454/5 Sir Robert Ogle (d. 1469) employed Robert Raymes of Shortflatt and Robert Mitford of Seghill to put his brother, John, in possession of the manor of North Middleton for life.²⁴

A greater degree of trust was involved in an 'enfeoffment to use' whereby a landowner granted legal ownership of his property in fee simple (without restriction to a particular type of heir) to trustees on the understanding that they would continue to follow the

¹⁹ *HN*, vol. 2, (2), 112.

²⁰ *NDD*, pp. 151-52.

²¹ 'North Country Deeds', ed. Brown, p. 120.

²² Northumberland Archives, ZSW/5/67.

²³ *HN*, vol. 2, (1), 317, 326.

²⁴ *NCH*, vol. 9, 150; *NDD*, p. 214.

directives of the grantor.²⁵ This tactic was a ploy to bypass inheritance legislation and foil any rights to wardship that a feudal lord may have if the heir was a minor. The recruitment of a several trustees reduced the risk of complicity but it was no guarantee of success. Edmund Hastings knew from bitter experience that problems could arise. During the early part of the fifteenth century he and his co-trustees refused to return lord Latimer's estates, which resulted in his temporary confinement in the Tower, and when his deceased son's feoffees surrendered their ownership of west Matfen, it set off a chain of events that culminated in the abduction of his grandson and heir.²⁶ When Hastings settled his estates centred on Edlingham on trustees in 1445 he assembled a group comprising a blood relative, lesser gentry and a cleric.²⁷ The party encompassed his second son, William, who had survived his elder brother; his neighbours John Lilburn of Shawdon and John Selby of Biddlestone; Richard Pingill, vicar of Edlingham; and James Buck of Morpeth. Hastings' personal experiences were unique but his selection was more commonplace. Elements of this combination were used solely or mixed and matched by the gentry to meet their own personal inclinations. Occasionally, estates were placed in the hands of men of equal or higher status but on the whole this situation was avoided, just in case it proved too much of a temptation.

The largest group of witnesses, both in terms of number and geographical extent, came together in support of John Delaval. It was probably very soon after the death of John Neville at Barnet in 1471 that Delaval took the opportunity to endorse his claim as

²⁵ Given-Wilson, *English Nobility*, p. 140.

²⁶ Roskell, *Parliament of 1422*, p. 189; Roskell et al., *HOC*, vol. 3, 318.

²⁷ Northumberland Archives, ZSW/3/16.

‘next of blode’ to Elizabeth Burcester. Twenty-two individuals identified as senior ecclesiastics, servants of the crown and various members of the gentry were rallied in an impressive show of solidarity to defend his title.²⁸ Delaval’s network ran from Tynemouth up the east coast into northern Northumberland as far as Shawdon and in a westerly direction as far as Bywell.

Everyone at some point had to come to terms with his or her own mortality but death was not the great leveller. Although last wills become plentiful during the fifteenth century, they were a mark of the wealthier classes who had possessions to dispose of and the means to expedite the transmission of their souls through purgatory.²⁹ Custom and law regulated the inheritance of real property but personal effects could be bequeathed at an individual’s discretion.³⁰ Such arrangements unavoidably meant placing a heavy reliance on others. Testators needed witnesses to verify that the will was of their making, executors to fulfil the provisions *post mortem*, and sometimes supervisors to monitor the process.³¹

²⁸ Northumberland Archives, Watd ch. 66.

²⁹ Originally a will and a testament were separate documents but the distinction gradually blurred over time and vanished completely by the early modern period. A will was a written statement by which a person devised real property (land and immoveable goods) whereas a testament detailed bequests of personal property (chattels and money) and dealt with any debts owing to or liable from the estate. A tenant could not bequeath land held under feudal tenure by will to younger children nor pay creditors from his estates, R.A. Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion, and the Family in England, 1480-1750* (Oxford, 1998) p. 81.

³⁰ For customs see Houlbrooke, *English Family*, pp. 229-38 and M.M. Sheenan, ‘English Wills and the Records of the Ecclesiastical and Civil Jurisdictions’, *JMH*, 14 (1988), 5, 8-9.

³¹ A preference for affinal kin in all these positions was noted by Acheson, *Leicestershire*, p. 154. Almost all executors were identified as members of the family or clerics by Wright, *Derbyshire Gentry*, pp. 53-54. Immediate family and friends were found by Payling, *Political Society*, p. 85.

Wills are notoriously difficult sources to interpret. One cannot be sure to what extent they may have been influenced by those who penned them; legacies might represent just a proportion of property if some had been dispersed at an earlier date; provisions could be assigned separately and the prospect of death may have made an individual more eager to make pious and charitable bequests than they had been during their lifetime.³² Just two wills made by permanent residents within the county are extant, those of Sir Robert Ogle (d. 1410) and Isabel, widow of his grandson, Robert, lord Ogle, (d. 1469).³³ The lack of material also raises uncertainty as to how typical the extant material may be in relation to other gentry landholders, but their content is not incompatible with that found in other areas of the country.³⁴ Only Isabel's will names her witnesses John Thursby, rector of Thursby, Richard Pickden and Andrea Hedley – all of whom were not relatives. Kin were chosen as executors in both instances. Lady Ogle selected her daughter, Isabel, and son-in-law, Sir John Widdrington. Sir Robert engaged a wider grouping of dependable people, probably as added security that his bequests would be carried out.³⁵ He overlooked his heir, Robert, in favour of his

³² C. Burgess, 'Late Medieval Wills and Pious Convention: Testamentary Evidence Reconsidered', in M.A. Hicks (ed.), *Profit, Piety and the Professions in Later Medieval England* (Gloucester, 1990), pp. 14-33.

³³ *Wills and Inventories Illustrative of the History, Manners, Language, Statistics etc. of the Northern Counties of England*, ed., J. Raine et al., vol. 1, SS, 2 (1835), 47-49 but note a dating error, see Roskell et al., *HOC*, vol. 3, 859. An abstract of Lady Ogle's will is given in *HN*, vol. 2, (2), 391.

³⁴ For example, Acheson, *Leicestershire*, pp. 187-98; C. Carpenter, 'The Religion of the Gentry of Fifteenth-Century England', in D. Williams (ed.), *England in the Fifteenth-Century: Proceedings of the 1986 Harlaxton Symposium* (Woodbridge, 1987), pp. 53-74; P.W. Fleming, 'Charity, Faith and the Gentry of Kent 1422-1529', in A.J. Pollard (ed.), *Property and Politics: Essays in Later English Medieval History* (Gloucester, 1984), pp. 36-58; M.G.A. Vale, 'Piety, Charity and Literacy among the Yorkshire Gentry, 1370-1480', *Borthwick Paper*, 50 (1976), 1-32.

³⁵ Maddern, 'Friends of the Dead', in Archer and Walker, *Rulers and Ruled*, pp. 169-174. For the background behind his choice see Roskell et al., *HOC*, vol. 3, 860.

younger and favourite son, John, together with his friends, Sir John Clavering, John Blenkinsop and William Thimbleby, rector of the church at Bothal. In return for their service each man was to have a colt and 40s. ‘so that he might appropriate nothing from my goods’.³⁶

The preamble of Robert Ogle’s will is a little odd, probably due to an oversight of the scribe, as it omits the intended recipient(s) of his ‘sinful soul’. Isabel’s commendation was standard in directing her soul to God Almighty, the Virgin Mary and all the saints.³⁷ Provincial sites were chosen as resting places for their bodies: Isabel in the monastery of St. Andrew in Hexham, and Sir Robert in the parish church at Whalton, in the porch of the Blessed Mary that was to be roofed in lead at his expense. His interment there meant that Robert would remain at the hub of local affairs. The church porch was both a sacred and social space.³⁸ Northumbrians had little interest in grand commemorative church monuments.³⁹

³⁶ The dangers of abuse were widespread in contemporary literature, see T.L. Kinney, ‘“Two Secuturs and an Overseer Make Three Thieves”’: Popular Attitudes Toward False Executors of Wills and Testaments’, in G.R. Mermier and E.E. DuBruck (eds), *Fifteenth-Century Studies*, 3 vols (Michigan, 1978-80), vol. 3, 93-105; Maddern, ‘Friends of the Dead’, in Archer and Walker, *Rulers and Ruled*, p. 164; Houlbrooke, *Death*, p. 82 fn. 4. Mistrust persisted, for John Stow’s comment in *A Survey of London*, see C.A.J. Skeel, ‘Medieval Wills’, *History*, 10 (1925), p. 307.

³⁷ Houlbrooke, *Death*, p. 111. The Virgin Mary was considered to be influential on behalf of the sinful.

³⁸ Swanson, *Church and Society*, pp. 257-58. For the significance of porches in church architecture see C.N.L. Brooke, *The Medieval Idea of Marriage* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 253-56 and the detailed discussion in D.A. Postles, *Social Geographies in England 1200-1640* (Washington, DC., 2007), pp. 201-22.

³⁹ N. Pevesner and I. Richmond, *The Buildings of England: Northumberland*, 2nd edn, rev. J. Grundy et al., (London, 2002), pp. 56-57.

Whilst the propertied habitually wrangled over debt in the courts, both requested that their liabilities were settled, fearful that in the next life an unpaid bill would be regarded as tantamount to theft.⁴⁰ Masses were to be said for the salvation of their souls, of spouses, parents and benefactors, with separate adjuncts for any indebted souls and those of all the faithful departed. Robert requested that two honest and suitable chaplains from Whalton recite the *placebo* and *dirige*, as prescribed by canon law, for twelve years.⁴¹ This demand placed a considerable expense on the family estate as the chaplain's salaries were to be paid out of the rents from the temporary alienation of various lands.⁴² The masses requested by Isabel were to be funded through her moveable estate. In addition to his pious bequests Robert attended to charitable causes, leaving his mark in the neighbourhood, with a gift of 100s. for the repair of broken bridges in Northumberland, particularly those in his lordship.⁴³ He was keen to leave a gift to the mendicants too, though his ambiguity hints that this was a new subscription, 'any one of the order of begging Friars in Newcastle upon Tyne were to have 20s. or [lands] to the [same] value'. Isabel bequeathed the estates that she inherited from her father in Lancashire to her daughter and her husband and remembered her grandson, John Heron of Chipchase, issue from her daughter's first marriage.

In disposing of his property, Sir Robert considered the welfare and comfort of his friends. William Carr was to have all his lands and tenements in Heton for life and

⁴⁰ Fleming, in Pollard, *Property and Politics*, p. 37.

⁴¹ Cf. Vale, 'Piety, Charity and Literacy', 18. The author suggests that this type of request emerged in the second quarter of the fifteenth century but Ogle's will precedes this date.

⁴² Pollard, *North-Eastern England*, pp. 195-96; Acheson, *Leicestershire*, p. 188. The lands were identified as North Middleton, Denom, Hartwinton and Farnlaw.

⁴³ Carpenter, 'Religion of the Gentry', 66.

William Scriven the same in Folbery. Five men were to receive two mares each, as were his sons, and his heir was also to have a grey gelding. The only possessions associated with his martial existence were the suits of armour gifted to Thomas Blenkinsop and Robert Rochester, and a sword left to his son, John. The document concludes with an exhortation to his executors to carry out his requests or ‘incur the indignation of almighty God and all the Apostles’ and his own curse.

Even with the addition of dire warnings for failure to comply with the testator’s wishes, there was no guarantee that the conditions of the will would be carried out. Some of the provisions specified by Robert were certainly not executed. Administration of the will was granted to his eldest son, who had no legal entitlement, and his younger brother. How he acquired this position is not known but it was surely not by chance that the three remaining executors, Sir John Clavering, John Blenkinsop and William Thimbleby, had renounced the role.⁴⁴ Friction was only one of the forces at play as fate also had a hand in changing Ogle’s plans. He was not interred at Whalton as he wished. Following an outbreak of the plague his body was laid to rest near the sanctuary in the priory church of Hexham.⁴⁵

Other landholders in the county normally appointed spouses and their first-born sons as executors. Not all testators felt the need to include supervisors but when they did they were usually chosen from blood or affinal kin. Robert Hebburn (d. 1415) elected his

⁴⁴ Roskell et al., *HOC*, vol. 3, 860; Hedley, *Northumbrian Families*, vol. 2, 146.

⁴⁵ Roskell et al., *HOC*, vol. 3, 860.

son-in-law Richard Dalton.⁴⁶ Matilda, widow of Sir William Eure (d. 1467) named her nephews, lords Fitzhugh and Greystoke.⁴⁷ The nobility, with much more potentially at stake, had a preference for clerics and people of lower status in these roles.⁴⁸ William Harding of Newcastle upon Tyne and Walter Darley, rector of Morpeth, were among the executors of John, lord Greystoke, (d. 1436) and Edmund Hastings was designated as an overseer.⁴⁹

The discord between Sir Robert Lisle and Sir John Widdrington reported in John Mitford's proof of age serves as a reminder that relationships amongst the landed were not always harmonious. As Mervyn James noted, the cult of honour bred explicit and implicit violence but aggression was also 'subject to the restraints imposed by the solidarities of honour: lordship, kinship, friendship and the code implicit in honour itself'.⁵⁰ In this instance the two men negotiated an end to their disagreement without assistance but other modes of informal dispute resolution required the support of others to mediate between opposing parties and arbitrate or impose an award. Though initially disruptive, conflict could serve as a catalyst for social cohesion. The operation of extra-legal frameworks, particularly arbitration, forms part of a wider debate concerning the administration of royal justice and public order in fifteenth-century England.

⁴⁶ *Wills and Inventories*, ed. Raine et al., pp. 57-58.

⁴⁷ *Testamenta Eboracensia: A Selection of Wills from the Registry at York*, Pt II, ed. J. Raine et al., SS, 30 (1855), pp. 284-86.

⁴⁸ For example, see *ibid.*, Pt. I, 4 (1836), pp. 356-57, 375-79; *ibid.*, Pt. III, 53 (1864), pp. 304-10.

⁴⁹ *Wills and Inventories*, ed. Raine et al., pp. 84-86.

⁵⁰ James, *Society, Politics and Culture*, pp. 313-14.

Modern academics have found the legal system wanting, not least during the Wars of the Roses, and related its condition to the development of arbitration. John Bellamy regarded litigation as a protracted and fruitless course of action. Most cases were not brought to a close by a verdict but terminated because one party either tired or expired, whilst those individuals who did eventually get their day in court discovered that rulings could not always be executed.⁵¹ Reflecting on the north-west of England, Robin Storey recorded that the ‘... local judicial machinery commanded little or no respect’ whereas at least one arbitration award dating from the mid-century could be seen in most family and estate papers of the Westmorland gentry.⁵² Ralph Griffiths also considered an award to be ‘symptomatic’ of the deficiencies of the legal process and a very poor replacement.⁵³ On a positive note, Ian Rowney identified some of the advantages of the procedure.⁵⁴ More accommodating and less adversarial than the system under common law, arbitration offered ‘quick and cheap justice’ with an emphasis on the restoration of the peace. However, he too agreed that it was a substitute for the law and a temporary expedient.

Edward Powell challenged the conventional view in a seminal article.⁵⁵ Sceptical of the belief that arbitration and litigation were exclusive avenues, he scrutinised instances of

⁵¹ J. Bellamy, *Crime and Public Order in England in the Later Middle Ages* (London, 1973), pp. 114, 117-19.

⁵² Storey, *House of Lancaster*, pp. 121-22.

⁵³ Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 596.

⁵⁴ I. Rowney, ‘Arbitration in Gentry Disputes of the Later Middle Ages’, *History*, 67 (1982), 367-76.

⁵⁵ E. Powell, ‘Arbitration and the Law in England in the Late Middle Ages’, *TRHS*, 5th ser., 33 (1983), 49-67. Also *idem*, ‘Settlement of Disputes by Arbitration in Fifteenth-Century England’, *Law and History Review*, 2 (1984), 21-43.

overlap and the frequency of events. His findings demonstrated that litigants had not abandoned the courts in favour of arbitration but employed both processes to secure the favourable resolution of a dispute, 'in the same way as war and diplomacy, the two went hand in hand'.⁵⁶ Powell established that many suits had not reached a verdict because they were actually settled out of court. Disputants often had no intention of taking a lawsuit to its final conclusion but used the threat of litigation to pressurize an opponent to reach a private settlement. Where cases did progress, arbitration was often employed as an adjunct to or integrated into the legal system. Judges served as private arbiters and suits filed in chancery, to obtain an equitable solution where justice could not be had because of the power and influence of an opponent, or where common law offered an insufficient remedy, were frequently referred to arbitration. Furthermore, the practice was not specific to this period; it had a long tradition dating back to at least the thirteenth century and was still in use long after the fifteenth. In this revisionist interpretation 'the methods of arbitration characteristic of late-medieval England, far from reflecting the failure of the legal system ... represent rather a measure of its success'.⁵⁷

Little evidence can be found in Northumberland of the popularity of arbitration that has been observed in other parts of north-eastern England and elsewhere in the realm.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Powell, 'Arbitration and the Law', 57.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 62.

⁵⁸ Cf. Pollard, *North-Eastern England*, p. 116-19; idem, 'The Richmondshire Community of Gentry during the Wars of the Roses', in C.D. Ross (ed.), *Patronage, Pedigree and Power in Later Medieval England* (Gloucester, 1979), pp. 50-51; Barker, thesis, 177-82; Bennett, 'County Community', 24-44; Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, passim; Wright, *Derbyshire*

Northumberland is certainly not unique in this respect. Sources from the fifteenth century are scant across the three border counties and even for Westmorland there are not as many awards as one may think.⁵⁹ The paucity of material is all the more surprising given that landholders in the far north were probably more familiar with the process than most since arbitration was integral to the resolution of cross border disputes.⁶⁰

The extant sources are meagre and imperfect. Almost all relate to the *compromissio*, the formal written agreement to submit a dispute to arbitration that marked the first stage of the process. There are no corresponding awards and just one separate settlement. The lack of awards creates an added problem: is it an indication that arbitration amongst the gentry was not as popular as it was elsewhere? Were attempts at arbitration largely unsuccessful? Have awards simply failed to survive the passage of time? It would be reasonable to assume that the dearth and limited nature of the sources reflect an evidential problem rather than indicate an absence of the practice or a high failure rate.⁶¹ The shortage of routine documents such as manorial records, marriage settlements and wills has already been noted.

Gentry, pp. 122-27; Payling, *Political Society*, pp. 199-215; C.E. Moreton, *The Townsends and their World: Gentry, Law and Land in Norfolk, c.1450-1551* (Oxford, 1992), ch. 3.

⁵⁹ Armstrong, thesis, p. 298. The author found thirty-five references to arbitration or other compromise agreements relating to Northumberland, Cumberland and Westmorland. More than half of these awards, a total of nineteen, originated in Westmorland.

⁶⁰ C.J. Neville, 'Arbitration and Anglo-Scottish Border-Law in the Later Middle Ages', in M. Prestwich (ed.), *Liberties and Identities in the Medieval British Isles* (Woodbridge, 2008), pp. 37-55.

⁶¹ For evidence of arbitration during the fourteenth century see King, thesis, pp. 153-56, 161.

A reliance on so few sources obviously demands caution as they could potentially be misleading. That said, they do reinforce recent scholarship in terms of illustrating that the gentry, ecclesiastics and magnates played a key part in reconciling disputants. Affirmation that magnates were designated in these affairs is extremely useful. Many of their own records have been lost over time and their status tended to ensure compliance with an award, obviating the need for those concerned to retain them.⁶² An outline of the representation by each group is more revealing. Of the nine cases in total from Northumberland between 1408 and 1470, churchmen were selected in one case, the gentry in five. Magnates were named on six occasions, working independently or with members of their own council in four. The magnates were chosen so often is not surprising since they were ‘natural rulers’ in their own ‘countries’.⁶³ Their appearance clearly derives from a bias in the sources as almost all concern more noteworthy rather than lesser men.⁶⁴ For the substantial gentry, at least, the services of magnates seem to have been easily accessible.

Prominent landholders such as Sir Robert Ogle and Sir William Elmden could just as easily find themselves at the centre of conflict as assisting other people in their struggles. During the late 1420s they backed opposing sides in the Heron and Manners

⁶² Hicks, ‘Restraint, Mediation and Private Justice’, 67; idem, *English Political Culture in the Fifteenth Century* (London, 2002), p. 156.

⁶³ James, *Society, Politics and Culture*, p. 52. For examples of magnate intervention in other areas, documentation has survived relating to eight cases dealt with by the duke of Clarence, Hicks, ‘Restraint, Mediation and Private Justice’, 67; two cases were determined by Richard, duke of Gloucester but he was involved in more, Pollard, *North-Eastern England*, pp. 118-19.

⁶⁴ Wright, *Derbyshire Gentry*, p. 124, noted a similar pattern but does not indicate the level of frequency.

feud but in the middle of the decade they were the ones at loggerheads.⁶⁵ The reason behind their clash is not disclosed but it appears to have filtered down to their respective followings as their agreement encompassed ‘quarrels and debates between them, their men or servants’.⁶⁶ Each knight dug in behind county lines to defend his position. Sir Robert looked to Sir John Widdrington and his kinsman, John Fenwick, esquire, to act on his part. Ogle, together with another relative, Sir Henry Fenwick, and Thomas Ilderton, his parliamentary colleague, guaranteed compliance with an award under a £200 recognisance made in chancery to Elmden and his supporters.⁶⁷ The selection of guarantors raises a question further than the sources will go: were these another reciprocal bond among the gentry or did individuals choose people who they believed could keep them in check?

Elmden chose men closely associated with Durham, Sir William Bowes of Streatlam and William Chancellor, a senior official of Thomas Langley, to negotiate on his behalf.⁶⁸ An equivalent monetary pledge was made to the Ogle party by Elmden, John Trollop of Thornley and Christopher Spencer.⁶⁹ The arbitrators’ award was to be made in the chapel upon the bridge of Newcastle upon Tyne before the Nativity of the Virgin

⁶⁵ J.W. Armstrong, ‘Violence and Peacekeeping in the English Marches towards Scotland, c.1425-1440’, in L. Clark (ed.), *The Fifteenth Century VI: Identity and Insurgency in the Late Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 2006), p. 65. Ogle supported the rights of the Manners family while Sir William Elmden acted as a guarantor for Herons’ arbitration bond.

⁶⁶ CCR, 1422-29, p. 210.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 210; C. Rawcliffe, ‘Parliament and the Settlement of Disputes by Arbitration in the Later Middle Ages’, *Parliamentary History*, 9 (1990), 322. Ilderton apparently spoke on Ogle’s behalf while parliament was in session.

⁶⁸ CCR, 1422-29, p. 210. For Bowes see C.H. Hunter Blair, ‘The Sheriffs of County Durham’, *AA4*, 22, (1944), 42; for Chancellor see Liddy, *Bishopric of Durham*, pp. 129-30.

⁶⁹ CCR, 1422-29, p. 210. For Trollop, a Neville tenant, see Liddy, *Bishopric of Durham*, pp. 100-1.

(8 September) 1425. Should if no agreement be reached, an award was to be made by Henry Percy, second earl of Northumberland, Sir Robert Umfraville, and John, lord Greystoke, by the feast of St Matthew (21 September).⁷⁰ The panel appears to have been weighted in Elmden's favour as he was married to Umfraville's niece and Sir William Bowes was Greystoke's brother-in-law. Whether the arbiters or the umpires made the actual award is not identified but it seems to have been upheld since there is no indication of further disturbance.

The earls of Northumberland were called upon most often amongst the nobility. Local squabbles were of particular concern since they impinged on their professional responsibilities. As traditional wardens of the east march towards Scotland, they needed co-operation between the gentry to defend and administer the border.⁷¹ Sometime before 1455 Henry Percy adjudicated in a wrangle of unknown origin between Thomas Ilderton and his retainer William Bertram. Ilderton had friends in very high places; Henry VI wrote to the earl on behalf of his 'welbelovyd' squire.⁷² In 1465, two years following his elevation as Percy's successor, John Neville and his council were drawn into disputes that spilled into neighbouring Cumberland, where his elder and powerful

⁷⁰ Provision was made for Greystoke's absence on the designated day, leaving Percy and Umfraville to make a decision. Rawcliffe, 'The Great Lord as Peacekeeper', p. 40, fn.20, names Lord Fitzwilliam in error for Sir Robert Umfraville. For the chapel of St Thomas the Martyr see Goodman, in Newton and Pollard, *Newcastle and Gateshead*, pp. 98-99.

⁷¹ Storey, 'Wardens of the Marches', 613-15. The Neville brothers controlled the east and west marches at this date.

⁷² *Letters of Queen Margaret of Anjou, Bishop Beckett and Others*, ed. C. Munro, Camden Society, 86 (1863), p. 68.

brother Richard, earl of Warwick, had lands and political presence.⁷³ Six years after the death of Sir Henry Fenwick, his daughters and their Cumbrian husbands agreed to stand John Neville's award in a spat with their kinsman, John Fenwick of Wallington, over the family estates in Northumberland.⁷⁴ John Fenwick was no doubt aware that his opponents were members of the Neville affinity.⁷⁵ The same was very probably true of John Whitfield of Whitfield, in Allendale, who later that year agreed to abide by the earl's judgement in an unidentified row with Margaret, widow of Sir William Stapleton of Edenhall, under a £100 recognisance in chancery.⁷⁶ That Ogle, Fenwick and Whitfield were willing to accept magnate awards despite the affiliation of their rivals demonstrates that they had an expectation of fair play.⁷⁷

The Fenwicks' disagreement appears to have arisen because Sir Henry's estates had previously been entailed in tail male, which made a collateral male relative, his nephew, John, heir to the Fenwick estates rather than his own daughters. Neville's award is not extant but we know its terms: John was given the properties that descended to him through the Fenwick line while Sir Henry's daughters received those that descended from the Heton side of the family.⁷⁸ Although the award flouted the

⁷³ A.J. Pollard, *Warwick the Kingmaker: Power, Politics and Fame* (London, 2007), pp. 107-9.

⁷⁴ *NDD*, p. 60. Henry Fenwick died before 14 September 1459.

⁷⁵ Pollard, *Warwick*, pp. 108-112, 121. John Denton, Christopher Moresby, Sir John Huddleston, Sir Thomas Lampleugh and John Radcliffe were married to Sir Henry's daughters. Christopher Moresby, the husband of Fenwick's second daughter, Elizabeth, was dead by this date.

⁷⁶ *Idem.*, p. 108; *CCR*, 1461-68, pp. 330-31. Richard Salkeld of Corby, another Neville follower, acted for Stapleton.

⁷⁷ Hicks, 'Restraint, Mediation and Private Justice', 63.

⁷⁸ Dendy, 'The Heton-Fenwick-Denton Line of Descent', 178.

standard rules of inheritance, both parties must have considered it to be an equitable decision. Neville's ruling was observed until 1527 when John Fenwick's grandson took possession of Lowick tower that belonged to the descendants of Henry Fenwick's daughters.⁷⁹

Arbitrations were made even when there was no earl of Northumberland, though substitutes were slow to step up to the mark. The dispute between Sir Robert Ogle and his brother was addressed in parliament and resolved locally under the arbitration of Thomas Langley, bishop of Durham, and Ralph, earl of Westmorland. Within twenty-four hours of his father's death on 31 October 1409, Robert Ogle led an army of two-hundred men, including Scots, and seized the castle and manor at Bothal that had been settled on his younger sibling.⁸⁰ Two magistrates, Sir John Widdrington and Sampson Harding, instructed the rebels to quit in the name of the king but their call fell on deaf ears and they 'dared do no more for fear of their lives'.⁸¹ Although the clash involved a large body of fighting men there were in fact no fatalities. Bertram petitioned the Commons the following February and pleaded for the restoration of his property on the basis that neither love nor law was to be had in the east march.⁸² In response, the king

⁷⁹ Ibid., 179.

⁸⁰ For the grant of Bothal to Bertram see *CPR*, 1408-13, p. 116. For earlier transactions concerning this estate see Roskell et al., *HOC*, vol. 3, 211.

⁸¹ Given-Wilson (ed.), 'Henry IV: Parliament of January 1410, Text and Translation', in *PROME*, item 36.

⁸² Ibid., 'Considering that the said castle and manor are so close to the east March of Scotland that adequate remedy cannot be made to the said supplicant there by recourse to the common law; by way of charity.' For the parallel in medieval thought see M. Clanchy, 'Law and Love in the Middle Ages', in J. Bossy (ed.), *Disputes and Settlements: Law and Human Relations in the West* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 47-67, esp. 61-66; S. Roberts, 'The Study of Dispute: Anthropological Perspectives', in Bossy, *Disputes and Settlements*, pp. 11-12.

and lords ordered the immediate surrender of Bothal into the custody of the crown and summoned Robert to appear before the king's council on 25 May to account for his actions.

Given that more than two months elapsed between Robert's assault on Bothal and the presentation of Bertram's petition there was clearly some leeway to try to contain the argument. Averting the crisis may not have been an option as there is no hint of Ogle's rancour prior to the event. At least two men of rank could have intervened thereafter: Henry IV's son John, duke of Bedford, Percy's replacement as warden of the east march, and Thomas Langley, bishop of Durham, a member of the king's council and Ogle's patron.⁸³ Yet neither man came forward. The proceedings at Westminster sparked a concerted effort closer to home to bring an end to the matter. An associated document dated 23 April refers to Bertram's petition and records the brothers' agreement to arbitration by Langley and Westmorland. Ogle had engaged the support of Sir Thomas Tunstall of Thurland Castle, Lancashire, the second husband of his mother-in-law, Joan Grey (née Mowbray) to act on his behalf while Bertram selected John Detton.⁸⁴ Under the terms of the settlement no further suits were to be initiated by either party, or their servants, and Bertram was to have possession of the barony, castle, lordship and manor of Bothal as previously granted. Ogle's participation could be seen as no more than a gesture to appease the council but the men were reconciled as they

⁸³ Storey, 'Wardens of the Marches', 613; C.M. Fraser, 'Langley, Thomas (c.1360-1437)', *ODNB*, vol. 42, 501; Roskell, et al., *HOC*, vol. 3, 859-60.

⁸⁴ Tunstall was king's knight in 1402, *CPR*, 1401-1405, p. 164.

later became involved in various dealings.⁸⁵ Bertram appears to have been confident that his brother would stick to his side of the bargain. It was only upon his brother Robert's death in 1436 that he moved to safeguard Bothal by conveying his estate to Nottinghamshire landholders.⁸⁶

Barrie Dobson has shown how lords spiritual and senior members of the clergy brought an end to the feud between the Heron and Manners families.⁸⁷ He argued that ties of locality, lordship and the law were either largely absent from or ineffective in settling this dispute and that in the north of England the Church and clergy may well have been the leading agent in the preservation of the peace. The extant evidence suggests that the Heron and Manners feud was unusual in that it resulted in two deaths. Representatives of the church did indeed play an important role in arbitrating the quarrel between the two families. As the copious case notes demonstrate, painstaking work went into securing a final agreement. The conclusion that lordship was largely absent from or ineffective in settling this dispute has perhaps been overplayed. Magnates and members of their councils did not participate in the day-to-day management of the wrangles between the two sides but the authority of lordship was central to its resolution. By prior agreement of the disputants magnates were given the final say in making an award, whether or not they actually did so is immaterial. The earl of Northumberland was also conversant with the details and developments of the case. He held copies of

⁸⁵ Roskell et al., *HOC*, vol. 3, 213.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Dobson, in Pollard, *The North of England in the Age of Richard III*, pp. 1-17. For a detailed account and analysis of this episode see Armstrong, in Clark, *The Fifteenth Century VI*, pp. 53-71.

key documents made between the warring parties, including the bonds to arbitration, and observed the reconciliation ceremony at the church of All Saints in Newcastle.⁸⁸

Conflict between two families so close to the border was hardly in Percy's interest, which does raise the question as to why he, or members of his council, did not deal with this issue independently. There is no answer to this, only supposition. Heron's company were at the bishop of Durham's castle at Norham and most probably accessed the armoury there before setting out for John Manners' home at Etal where the fatal skirmish took place. From the earl's perspective, it might be argued that Langley was therefore responsible for sorting out the mess. On a more emotive level, Northumberland could have been nursing a grudge. The bishop had recently been involved in the virtual disinheritance of his former ward and brother-in-law, Ralph Neville, second earl of Westmorland.⁸⁹

As 'arbitration rarely occurred in isolation from litigation' the remainder of this chapter focuses on associated interaction with the royal courts of justice.⁹⁰ Civil actions involving the possession of debt and land fell under the sole jurisdiction of the court of common pleas, which produced voluminous records known as the *de banco* rolls.⁹¹ A search of printed abstracts for actions corresponding with arbitrations returns a poor

⁸⁸ Armstrong, thesis, pp. 66-67.

⁸⁹ Pollard, in Dockray and Fleming, *People, Politics and Perspectives*, pp. 73-74.

⁹⁰ Powell, 'Settlement of Disputes', 38.

⁹¹ M. Hastings, *The Court of Common Pleas in Fifteenth Century England: A Study of Legal Administration and Procedure* (Hamden, Conn., 1971), pp. 16, 237.

yield.⁹² Only one case comes to light which concerned the Fenwick dispute prior to John Neville's award in 1465. In 1460, not long after Sir Henry Fenwick's death, his son-in-law, Sir John Huddleston, tested the family's legal position by bringing an action against John Fenwick of Wallington for forcibly entering a close at Fenwick.⁹³ The volume of civil actions between local residents dealt with by the court was certainly not high: one hundred and twenty-two cases were recorded for Northumberland between 1408 and 1466. At less than two cases a year these figures sit uncomfortably with the notion of 'late medieval England as an obsessively litigious society'.⁹⁴ On the other hand, it has been argued that the expense of filing a suit at Westminster was prohibitive for most landholders.⁹⁵

Genuine cases were almost certainly lower in number than the records indicate. Legal actions were often fabricated, a common ruse to ensure details of the conveyance of freehold property were registered in official archives.⁹⁶ Roger Thornton, for example, filed a fictitious suit against Thomas Griffiths in 1406 concerning the manors of Witton-on-the-Water, Stannington and Benton, which Griffiths had conveyed to Thornton in July 1405.⁹⁷ Court usage needs to be seen in perspective and from the early fifteenth century there is a general pattern of decline in the court's activity that

⁹² 'Extracts from the De Banco Rolls relating to Northumberland, 1308-1558', ed. F.W. Dendy, AA3, 6 (1910), 69-81.

⁹³ Ibid., 80. As noted by Dendy, 'The Heton-Fenwick-Denton Line', 178.

⁹⁴ E. Powell, *Kingship, Law and Society: Criminal Justice in the Reign of Henry V* (Oxford, 1989), p. 90.

⁹⁵ Ellis, 'Civilizing Northumberland', 141.

⁹⁶ Courts produced documents to endorse rulings on ownership known as feet of fines. The judgement was copied three times on a document, to the right and to left hand side, which were given to each of the parties, and again at the foot that was retained by the court.

⁹⁷ 'Banco Rolls', ed. Dendy, 68; *NDD*, p. 2.

continued well into the Tudor period.⁹⁸ Northumberland does not seem to have been following a general trend but an arrangement that was more specific. A geographical analysis of litigation pursued through the court during 1441 illustrates that few suits originated from the north of England as a whole. The northern assize circuit area, which encompassed the counties of Northumberland, Westmorland, Cumberland and Yorkshire, accounted for just 7 per cent of all business conducted.⁹⁹ Compared to other judicial circuits, only Middlesex produced a smaller caseload of 3 per cent, whereas Norfolk generated almost 25 per cent of all suits.¹⁰⁰

The low correlation between arbitration and litigation suggests two obvious possibilities: firstly, that there was indeed a heavy reliance on local peace-keeping or secondly, that the cases brought to arbitration involved significant offences and were referred up to king's bench.¹⁰¹

The court of king's bench handled reported allegations of crime and was divided into two parts: the crown side, which had unlimited criminal jurisdiction, and the plea side that dealt with civil actions of trespass, appeals of felony (serious crime) and breaches of the peace. Jackson Armstrong's research provides an analysis of king's bench records for the period 1400-1494, which includes crown indictments for the counties of

⁹⁸ M. Blatcher, *The Court of King's Bench, 1450-1550: A Study in Self Help* (London, 1978), p. 21; Ellis, 'Civilizing Northumberland', 140-41.

⁹⁹ C.W. Brooks, *Lawyers, Litigation and English Society since 1450* (London, 1998), pp. 78-79.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ The presentment of cases at king's bench has been seen as a reflection of the failure or weakening of local peace-keeping, see Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 364, 393-97.

Cumberland, Northumberland and Westmorland and indictments taken from the respective county plea rolls but only from the Michaelmas Term.¹⁰² As he acknowledged, the survey of legal records was incomplete but there were few instances of awards and court cases that married together.¹⁰³ Unfortunately, no indication is given of the number of matches for Northumberland. Armstrong concluded that arbitration was a ‘regular first stop in the disputing process in the English marches’.¹⁰⁴

Northumbrian gentry did litigate in king’s bench, quite possibly in conjunction with arbitration, for which no records survive. Whether or not they sued more than others and could be seen as more disorderly than their contemporaries is difficult to judge. As Armstrong’s study combines both crown and private indictments the level of private litigation cannot be isolated. Barring a full inspection of this material, the only available ‘measure’, and a narrow one at that, derives from combining Armstrong’s findings with an independent piece of research. Rosemary Hayes surveyed crown indictments in king’s bench records for Cumberland, Durham, Lancashire, Northumberland, Westmorland and Yorkshire from 1461 to 1509.¹⁰⁵ She found that the level of reported alleged crime in the north of England was lower than elsewhere, lower in the borders than in Yorkshire, and lower in the reign of Edward IV than Henry VII.

¹⁰² Armstrong, thesis, p. 116.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 299.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ R.C.E. Hayes, ‘‘Ancient Indictments’, 1461-1509’, in A.J. Pollard (ed.), *The North of England in the Age of Richard III* (Stroud, 1996) pp. 19-46.

As both pieces of work overlap the period 1461-85, it is possible to use Armstrong's gross figures as a starting point and then to subtract those provided by Hayes to obtain the net number of pleas recorded for each Michaelmas Term. Admittedly, this is an extremely crude yardstick as it only includes one plea roll but all crown indictments. Consequently, the outcome is predisposed to reflect a greater percentage of crown indictments than existed in reality. The net figures shown in Table 3 provide a provisional impression of court usage.¹⁰⁶

Table 3. Suits in King's Bench Originating in the Northern Counties, 1461-85

County	All KB Indictments ¹⁰⁷	No. Crown Indictments ¹⁰⁸	No. Plea Indictments	Crown Indictments (% of KB)	Plea Indictments (% of KB)
Cumberland	54	2	52	4	96
Northumberland	40	5	35	13	87
Westmorland	45	0	45	0	100
Total	139	7	132	5	95

Overall, the number of indictments for the three northern counties over a period of twenty-four years is extremely low, producing an average of around five cases a year. Litigation progressed on behalf of the crown was negligible, with private pleas forming

¹⁰⁶ Account has been made of dates of accession during this period, to include the reign of Edward IV, who acceded to the throne on 4 March 1461, and Henry VII who acceded on 22 Aug 1485, though there were no pleas from the border counties that year.

¹⁰⁷ Based on data provided by Armstrong, thesis, p. 107, Fig. 8.

¹⁰⁸ Hayes, in Pollard, *The North of England in the Age of Richard III*, p. 26, Table 2A.

the bulk of all indictments. All of the indictments for Westmorland were private pleas and nearly all for Cumberland. Northumberland, which had the lowest number of indictments in total and the greatest number progressed by the crown, naturally generates the lowest percentage.

If private actions from the three remaining law terms were included, the percentage of private pleas would almost certainly increase from the figures shown above but the addition in terms of a general profile is unnecessary. It could be argued that the number of serious offences was probably lower than indicated in this analysis since litigation was used as a tactical weapon and reported crime does not necessarily equate with actual crime. As in East Anglia, it may be that almost three-quarters of cases on the plea side may have been withdrawn before a jury sat.¹⁰⁹ King's bench was one of the forums in which locality and centre interacted but for the people of Northumberland, and the north in general, it was never more than an occasional encounter.

In dealing with their property, Northumbrians generally conformed with the typology suggested by Harriss. The only exception occurred in the supervision of their wills, which suggests they were more trusting of kin, who were preferred over lords. Social networks were largely governed by topography. The central courts were used infrequently but Northumberland was not lawless. Records from king's bench show that more people were indicted in Cumberland and Westmorland than Northumberland.

¹⁰⁹ P.C. Maddern, *Violence and Social Order in East Anglia, 1422-1442* (Oxford, 1992), p. 36.

The quarrels between Bertram and Ogle and Heron and Manners were atypical. When disputes arose, including those that crossed the border, they were generally settled peacefully by arbitration in which the earls of Northumberland often took a significant role.

6

Crown Administration

Government in England was one of the most sophisticated in Europe.¹ From its centre at Westminster, the king's command travelled to the most remote areas of his realm. Although an advanced system for its time, it lacked the infrastructure to function independently. The operation of government and administration in the shires relied on the voluntary participation of the local landed élites.² The county of Northumberland apart from the liberties was no different from any other shire in terms of the range of officials who were appointed to protect the king's interests and manage affairs in his name. A coroner, escheator, sheriff and justices of the peace, supported by understaff, dealt with a myriad of instructions.³ The individuals who occupied these positions had standing within the community but they were also susceptible to local influence, which left the system open to potential abuse.⁴ Tony Pollard has explored this subject in relation to key officers in north-eastern England during the second half of the century, the period of greatest interest.⁵ This chapter takes another perspective on the interplay between crown and county. What does a study of routine administration reveal about relations between centre and periphery, specifically the contention that

¹ Brown, *Governance*, p. 1.

² Harriss, 'Political Society', 28-57.

³ H.M. Jewell, *English Local Administration in the Middle Ages* (Newton Abbot, 1972), pp. 100-2, 145-47, 153-57, 182-99.

⁴ Hicks, *English Political Culture*, p. 183.

⁵ Pollard, *North-Eastern England*, pp. 144-72.

Northumberland's distance from Westminster made it difficult for the crown to govern?⁶

An analysis of run-of-the-mill records may seem rather dull but it is pertinent to the discussion of government. In the words of Stanley Chrimes, 'it must never be forgotten that the medieval administrative system was the creation of the monarchy, designed and fashioned to give expression to the principle of personal government by the king, in whom alone supreme executive authority was vested'.⁷ The character of Lancastrian kingship though was hardly consistent. While Henry V has been regarded as an 'able administrator',⁸ Christine Carpenter has recently argued that the central departments of the chancery and exchequer were undermined in the reign of Henry VI, which the author described as a 'crisis of kingship and politics but also an administrative crisis'.⁹

An examination of the escheatry also provides an opportunity to recover lost ground. The escheator has often been overlooked since he did not have a judicial function and generally regarded as a minor official of 'not quite the same substance as sheriffs'.¹⁰ Moreover, the offices of escheator and sheriff both lost status during the period as the

⁶ For an analysis in another administrative context see P. Nightingale, 'The Intervention of the Crown and the Effectiveness of the Sheriff in the Execution of Judicial Writs, c.1355–1530', *EHR*, 123 (2008), 1–34.

⁷ Quotation cited in M. Richardson, *The Medieval Chancery under Henry V*, List and Index Society, Special Series 30 (Kew, 1999), p. 6.

⁸ Hicks, *English Political Culture*, p. 47.

⁹ C. Carpenter, 'Henry VI and the Deskillling of the Royal Bureaucracy', in L. Clark (ed.), *Fifteenth Century IX: English and Continental Perspectives* (Woodbridge, 2010), p. 23.

¹⁰ Brown, *Governance*, p. 145. Also Harriss, *Shaping the Nation*, p. 166; Carpenter, 'Introduction', *CIPM*, 1422–27, p. 8.

powers of justices of peace increased.¹¹ Yet the escheator's role was of considerable importance as the linchpin between the ruling élites, whose most cherished possession was land, and chancery at the centre. Modern research is also desperately lacking. The most comprehensive work on this particular office is more than fifty years old.¹²

Before that dialogue begins, the particular arrangements made for the charge of Roger Widdrington, pricked as sheriff of Northumberland in 1431, could be seen as a reflection of the considerable geographical distance between Northumberland and Westminster. Sheriffs were normally sworn at the exchequer but Widdrington took his oath before John Wessington, prior of Durham.¹³ In addition to the standard requirements of the sheriff's oath, Widdrington was to 'deestroye and make to cese all maner of heresyis and errores commonly called Lollardnes within his balliwick'.¹⁴ Anxiety stemmed from a lollard rising earlier that year.¹⁵ As lollardy posed a direct challenge to the church this could possibly explain the prior's involvement but the same duty was assigned to another head of a religious house in different circumstances.

In the south of England, John Scot of Kent took the sheriff's oath on 19 September 1460 before the prior of Christ Church, Canterbury, and another commissioner. On this

¹¹ Carpenter, 'Introduction', *CIPM*, 1422-27, p. 8.

¹² E.R. Stevenson, 'The Escheator', in J.F. Willard et al. (eds), *The English Government at Work, 1327-36*, 3 vols (Cambridge, Mass., 1940-50), vol. 2, 109-67.

¹³ Brown, *Governance*, p. 54; Durham Cathedral Muniments: Registrum Parvum II, ff. 52v-53v. The oath is printed in *Historiae Dunelmensis Scriptores Tres*, SS, 9 (1839), p. 220. From this discussion it would seem that oaths were tailored at a county level; cf. Jewell, *Local Administration*, pp. 193-94.

¹⁴ Durham Cathedral Muniments: Registrum Parvum II, ff. 52v-53v.

¹⁵ Hicks, *English Political Culture*, p. 11.

occasion an additional requirement within the oath related to the 'eschewing and restraint of manslaughters and other manifold grievous offences ... by such as name themselves soldiers and by other vagrants'.¹⁶ One of the manifestos of Jack Cade, the local man who led a popular rebellion in 1450, was back in circulation.¹⁷ At this time the Yorkists had secured power and the underlying concern was re-asserting order in the county.

The Church provided a system of royal agents who acted as intermediaries between centre and locality. Both priors were delegated to receive the men's oaths because they were able to monitor events at close quarters on behalf of the crown. Ecclesiastics also headed local commissions of the peace and were deployed as local tax collectors. The clergy operated at the centre too as the king's chief ministers. Prior Wessington's secular lord, bishop Thomas Langley, was keeper of the privy seal from November 1401 to March 1405, lord chancellor from this date until January 1407 (as Dean of York) and held the post again from 1417-24 (as bishop of Durham).¹⁸ Likewise, Canterbury was the see of archbishop Thomas Bourchier, lord chancellor from 1455-56.¹⁹

To return to the subject of the escheatry, appointments were made by the chancellor, treasurer of the exchequer and justices, generally for a year.²⁰ Eligibility for the role

¹⁶ *English Historical Documents*, vol. 4, ed. A.R. Myers (London, 1969), 555-56.

¹⁷ Hicks, *English Political Culture*, p. 199.

¹⁸ Fraser, 'Langley, Thomas', *ODNB*, vol. 42, 501.

¹⁹ Clark, 'Bourchier, Thomas', *ODNB*, vol. 6, 815.

²⁰ Carpenter, 'Introduction', *CIPM*, 1422-27, p. 9.

was restricted by a property qualification of a minimum of £20 per annum from land in fee.²¹ The primary function of the escheator was to return a profit.²² His key responsibilities encompassed the safeguard, collection and account of royal feudal revenues, which encompassed taking inquisitions upon the death of a tenant-in-chief (inquisition *post mortem*) or for heirs to estates (proofs of age) to ascertain dues to the crown; making assignments of dower and partitions of estates; as well as accounting for the issues of land seized into king's hand.²³

In terms of succession as a tenant-in-chief it was 'generally in the interests of an adult heir that the whole process be carried out as speedily as possible'.²⁴ It is difficult to judge what this meant in practice. Whilst the substance of IPMs have attracted considerable attention, the mechanics and efficiency of the administrative system has been neglected by historians of the fifteenth century. A recent exception is Claire Noble's study, which explores the production, development and use of writs.²⁵ Scattered references give various accounts of the length of the process during the fifteenth century. For example, during 1440 the time that elapsed, from the date of a writ *diem clausit extremum* ordering an IPM to the date an IPM was held, ranged from

²¹ Ibid., pp. 8-9.

²² Hicks, 'Introduction', in idem (ed.), *Fifteenth-Century Inquisitions*, p. 11.

²³ Carpenter, 'Introduction', *CIPM*, 1422-27, p. 6.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 16.

²⁵ C. Noble, 'Writs and the Inquisitions *Post Mortem*: How the Crown Managed the System', in M. Hicks (ed.), *The Fifteenth-Century Inquisitions Post Mortem: A Companion* (Woodbridge, 2012), pp. 183-200.

nine days to two years.²⁶ Similarly, following the death of a tenant-in-chief, the process from writ *diem clausit extremum* to the return of an inquisition to chancery could take less than a month to over a year.²⁷

Work on the chronology and transmission of writs has largely concentrated on fourteenth-century England, utilising crown records and episcopal registers.²⁸ J. F. Willard highlighted a major obstacle for researchers in recognising that the dating clause on royal letters was not necessarily concomitant with the date of despatch.²⁹ Nevertheless, Eugene Stevenson surveyed two aspects of writ-driven administration: firstly, the time that elapsed from the death of a tenant-in-chief to the issue and execution of a writ *diem clausit extremum* and, secondly, the dates on which escheators were ordered to seize and deliver property in relation to the periods for which they accounted at the exchequer.³⁰ In regard to the process resulting in the execution of an IPM, he concluded that the ‘promptness with which the work was done’ was ‘testimony to not only the efficiency of the escheator’s office but also of the king’s post’, though he also acknowledged inconsistencies therein and numerous records where inquisitions

²⁶ Carpenter, ‘Introduction’, *CIPM*, 1422-27, p. 13. R.E. Latham, ‘Hints on the Public Records III: Inquisitions Post Mortem’, *Amateur Historian*, 1 (1953), 78. *Diem clausit extremum* is literally translated as ‘closed his last day’, i.e. he is dead.

²⁷ Noble, in Hicks, *Fifteenth-Century Inquisitions*, p.190.

²⁸ J.F. Willard, ‘The Dating and Delivery of Letters Patent and Writs in the Fourteenth Century’, *BIHR*, 10 (1933), 1-11; Stevenson, in Willard et al., *English Government*, vol. 2, 121-26; M. Ray, ‘Administrative Efficiency in Fourteenth-Century England: The Delivery of Writs based on Evidence from the Register of Bishop Martival’, *HR*, 84 (2011), 14-27. For the pace of communications during the fifteenth century see C.A.J. Armstrong, ‘Some Examples of the Distribution and Speed of News in England at the Time of the Wars of the Roses’, in R.W. Hunt, W.A. Pantin and R.W. Southern (eds), *Studies in Medieval History* (Oxford, 1948), pp. 429-54.

²⁹ Willard, ‘Dating and Delivery’, 2-3. A point reinforced and expanded upon by Noble, in Hicks, *Fifteenth-Century Inquisitions*, pp. 184, 191.

³⁰ Stevenson, in Willard et al., *English Government*, vol. 2, 122.

were not held for several months.³¹ Stevenson did not summarise his findings but an examination of his sample shows that inquisitions took place between five and one hundred and twenty-nine days from the date shown on writs *diem clausit extremum*, with an average of thirty-five days.³² A geographical breakdown is also lacking and the sample proves somewhat imperfect as none of the selected records includes shires north of the Humber. Stevenson's interpretation of efficient communication between centre and locality therefore glosses over the subject of distance.

Geography was not the sole determinant of the speed of communication.³³ Chancery experienced widespread difficulty in obtaining information from escheators during the early fifteenth century, a shortcoming that resulted in legislation. A statute of 1429 (8 Henry VI, c. 16) ordered that with effect from Easter 1430 escheators were required to submit returns within a month of taking an inquisition under a £40 penalty for default.³⁴

Generally issued by chancery following the death of a person thought to be a tenant-in-chief of the crown, a writ *diem clausit extremum* authorised an escheator to seize the individual's property held in fee and investigate particular details by conducting an inquisition *post mortem*. The purpose of the inquisition was to establish the crown's

³¹ Ibid., p. 122. Note that some of dating information is inaccurate.

³² Timescales calculated from *A Handbook of Dates for Students of British History*, ed. C.R. Cheney, new edn, rev. by M. Jones (Cambridge, 2000).

³³ Stevenson, in Willard et al., *English Government*, vol. 2, 122. For example, the timescales from writ to inquisition for two Cornish tenants-in-chief, Ralph de Beaupre and Henry de Kelligan, were fourteen days and seventy days respectively.

³⁴ A. Curry (ed.), 'Henry VI: Parliament of September 1429, Text and Translation', in *PROME*, item 56.

legal rights or ‘incidents’ of tenure as they later became known.³⁵ In order to determine any obligations due, the jury were instructed to identify the date the tenant died; the lands the deceased formerly possessed in demesne, in fee simple or entail; what land was held of the king and others; its annual value; the name of the heir and relation to the deceased and if they were of age.³⁶

The modern chancery series contain one hundred and nineteen abstracted returns describing the findings of inquisitions *post mortem* and consequent proceedings concerning Northumbrian tenants-in-chief held during the period 1399-1447.³⁷ Thirty-three records (28 per cent) date from the reign of Henry IV, 1399-1413, thirty-seven (31 per cent) from the reign of Henry V, 1413-22, and forty-nine (41 per cent) from the earlier part of the reign of Henry VI, which includes the longest term from 1422-47. What proportion of the original archive this material represents is impossible to estimate as there are no contemporaneous catalogues to enable a comparison of extant records and those known to be lost.

³⁵ Hicks, ‘Introduction’, in idem (ed.), *Fifteenth-Century Inquisitions*, pp. 11-21. For a wider discussion see Bean, *English Feudalism*, passim.

³⁶ Land in fee simple was neither enfeoffed, granted to others in legal settlement, nor entailed, subject to a restriction on inheritance, usually to male heirs, Hicks, ‘Introduction’, in idem (ed.), *Fifteenth-Century Inquisitions*, pp. xiii-xiv, 3.

³⁷ An IPM for Joan, duchess of York (widow of Henry Scrope) has been excluded as she was still living. The purpose of the inquisition was to establish her holdings following the forfeiture of her late husband’s estate, *CIPM*, 1413-18, p. 149. For the administrative practice in naming widows see M. Hicks, ‘Crossing Generations: Dower, Jointure and Courtesy’, in idem (ed.), *The Fifteenth-Century Inquisitions Post Mortem: A Companion* (Woodbridge, 2012), p. 27.

The *Fine Rolls*, compiled by chancery to inform the exchequer of payments owed to the king in return for royal favour, initially seem to offer some hope of an answer.³⁸ These registers indicate that an additional forty-three writs were issued, almost all classified as *diem clausit extremum*.³⁹ Details of this type of command were enrolled to alert the exchequer that the escheator had been ordered to sequester the deceased tenant's land, for which he would later be required to account. However, as the *Fine Rolls* were prepared for fiscal purposes they fall short of providing a complete inventory of writs demanding an IPM. Orders for further inquiries, which appear in the chancery calendars, are generally omitted from this material.⁴⁰

Ten of the additional forty-three writs entered on the *Fine Rolls* can be disregarded. Mandates relating to Elizabeth Thorley and Elizabeth Camoys were vacated as surrendered *in cera*, in the process of being sealed.⁴¹ Circumstances surrounding the

³⁸ Payment might be owed in money or in kind, A. Macfarlane, *A Guide to English Historical Records* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 34-36. Some deficiencies may correlate with documents identified as missing within each volume of the chancery series. However, there are instances where the number of additional writs exceed the quantity of records known to be lost. For example, two writs issued to Northumberland appear in the *Fine Rolls* for 1 H VI (1422), but no documents are noted as missing in the chancery series for that regnal year, see *CIPM*, 1422-27, pp. 51-56.

³⁹ Where found, inconsistencies between the chancery IPM series and *Fine Rolls* have been noted.

⁴⁰ For exceptions see *CFR*, 1399-1405, p. 78; *ibid.*, 1413-22, pp. 106, 144. Three writs are enrolled for Henry Heton. Whilst two corresponding IPMs have been calendared, a response to the second writ dated 6 February 1400 is wanting, *CIPM*, 1399-1405, p. 2. Given the short timescale, the instruction contained in the second writ may well have been incorporated into the last inquisition taken on 23 April. Two writs were enrolled for Brampton. An IPM has been calendared for the writ dated 29 January 1416 but a response to a later writ, dated 28 October, is also wanting, *CIPM*, 1413-18, p. 175.

⁴¹ *CFR*, 1413-22, pp. 143, 194, respectively. Elizabeth Thorley was a daughter and co-heiress of David Strathbogie, Earl of Atholl, who married firstly, Sir Thomas Percy, (d. c.1388) and secondly, Sir John Scrope (d. 1405), D. Richardson and K.G. Everingham, *Magna Carta Ancestry* (Baltimore, 2005), p. 26. Elizabeth Camoys (née Mortimer) had married Sir Henry

revocation of another two documents are easy to infer. Notification of the deaths of William Whitchester and Thomas Hebburn, during the spring and summer of 1422 respectively, were premature as writs *diem clausit extremum* were issued again for both men before the end of the year.⁴² Whilst it was not unusual for deaths to be notified in expectation of the event, the timescale is generally measured in weeks rather than months.⁴³

Other directives were apparently not fulfilled because of legal protocol or administrative failings. Outstanding writs were rendered void upon the demise of the monarch and in July 1431 chancery re-issued an order to take an inquisition for John Lumley, with the justification that 'Henry V died before the execution of the first'.⁴⁴ As the initial writ for Lumley was dated 18 April 1421 and Henry V did not die until 31 August 1422, the statement implies inertia at a local level but it was an oversight by chancery that resulted in the protracted delay. Appointed on 16 November 1420, John Cerff was the county escheator when the first writ for Lumley was issued and he appears to have been in post for the customary year as on 18 November 1421 he is

'Hotspur' Percy (d. 1403) as her first husband, Richardson and Everingham, *Magna Carta Ancestry*, p. 577.

⁴² *CFR*, 1413-22, pp. 426-27, respectively; *ibid.*, 1422-30, p. 1.

⁴³ Carpenter, 'Introduction', *CIPM*, 1422-27, p. 10; Noble, in Hicks, *Fifteenth-Century Inquisitions*, pp. 192-93. News of Lord Fitzhugh's death must have arrived at chancery sometime beforehand. He died at Ravensworth, Yorkshire, on 11 January 1425 and writs were dated just two days later, insufficient time to make the journey to London and for a writ to be processed, *CIPM*, 1422-27, pp. 387-92; Richardson and Everingham, *Magna Carta Ancestry*, p. 340.

⁴⁴ *CFR*, 1413-22, p. 378; *ibid.*, 1430-37, p. 48; *CIPM*, 1427-32, p. 362.

referred to as ‘late escheator’.⁴⁵ If a return had not been received in chancery when the escheatry changed hands, a writ *amotus* should have been issued to charge Cerff’s replacement to take an inquisition.⁴⁶ By that time, though, the future of the Lumley estates had already been decided. Within days of Cerff leaving office, Sir John Bertram gained custody of Lumley’s Northumbrian lands due to the minority of the heir.⁴⁷ This was one of a number of lapses concerning the estates of minors that eventually came to light when the heir came of age and sued for a writ *de etate probanda* to recover their inheritance.⁴⁸ John Lumley’s heir, Thomas, celebrated his twenty-first birthday in January 1431.

Chancery also seems to have neglected to respond to a change of personnel on an earlier occasion. In November 1421 a return to the writ for the IPM for Sir John Heron, dated 16 October 1420, was noted as outstanding and re-assigned because the previous escheator was removed from office before the order was served.⁴⁹ Sampson Harding’s term of office ended in November 1420, a few weeks after the original writ for Heron was issued, and he was succeeded by Cerff, but there is no record of a subsequent writ charging the new escheator to take Heron’s IPM.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ *CFR*, 1413-22, p. 413; cf. *List of Escheators for England and Wales*, List and Index Society, 72 (London, 1971), p. 103. However, Cerff was in post again by October 1422, see *CFR*, 1422-30, p. 13; *CIPM*, 1422-27, p. 150.

⁴⁶ Carpenter, ‘Introduction’, *CIPM*, 1422-27, p. 12.

⁴⁷ *CPR*, 1422-29, p. 200. Cerff evidently held an inquisition *ex-officio* for Lumley, which chancery subsequently used to specify the extent of Bertram’s grant.

⁴⁸ Carpenter, ‘Introduction’, *CIPM*, 1422-27, pp. 13-14.

⁴⁹ *CFR*, 1413-22, pp. 333, 412; *CIPM*, 1418-22, p. 121.

⁵⁰ As noted above, the escheatry seems to have changed hands twice between the date that the first writ was issued for Heron and the date of the second.

Writs for John Felton and Edward, late duke of York, are marked ‘vacated because nothing thereof was done’.⁵¹ Yet an IPM was taken for Felton and an additional return made.⁵² Another entry proves erroneous although the writ was correctly executed. Chancery named the deceased tenant as William Ogle, the elder, but an inquisition was actually taken for Sir Robert Ogle.⁵³ The absence of an IPM for Thomas Heron of Meldon is due to subsequent loss; the return was identified as missing in 1821.⁵⁴

Thirty-three writs addressed to the Northumberland escheator found in the *Fine Rolls* have no corresponding IPM in the calendars. This deficiency is not uncommon: a trawl of these documents dated from 1422 to 1427 uncovered numerous writs *diem clausit extremum* that were ‘apparently never returned’.⁵⁵ The absence of records is perplexing. It has been suggested that in some circumstances nil returns may have been discarded, though this practice would deviate from the norm.⁵⁶ The possibility that writs were deliberately ignored seems remote. Chancery did seek missing returns and it would be difficult to understand why an individual who had sufficient interest in the deceased’s estate to meet the costs of suing out a writ would not actively pursue its progress.⁵⁷ Yet these writs do not appear to have been answered with an IPM in the county since there

⁵¹ *CFR*, 1399-1405, p. 219; *ibid.*, 1413-22, p. 105, respectively.

⁵² Dated 12 February 1403, writs for Felton were directed to the escheators of Northampton and Northumberland and both officials held an inquisition in the following month, *CIPM*, 1399-1405, p. 249. No subsequent writ appears to have been issued for Edward, duke of York.

⁵³ *CFR*, 1405-13, p. 159; *ibid.*, *CIPM*, 1405-13, pp. 262-63.

⁵⁴ *CFR*, 1399-1405, p. 223; *CIPM*, 1399-1405, p. xiv.

⁵⁵ Noble, in Hicks, *Fifteenth-Century Inquisitions*, p. 185, fn.8.

⁵⁶ Hicks, ‘Introduction’, in *idem* (ed.), *Fifteenth-Century Inquisitions*, p. 7. I am grateful to Claire Noble for her thoughts on this issue and the subject of writs in general.

⁵⁷ Carpenter, ‘Introduction’, *CIPM*, 1422-27, p. 26.

are no extant records that mark the final stage of the process granting livery of seisin, or the custody of minors and their estates.⁵⁸

One example in particular suggests that orders may have been revoked if it later became known, perhaps from official sources, that an IPM was not required in the county. Robert, son and heir of Sir William Claxton, almost certainly sued out a writ for his father in a bid to revive the family claim to the barony of Dilston.⁵⁹ Sir William Claxton had held Dilston as a tenant-in-chief from 1416 but at some point between 1428 and 1429 another claimant, probably with the support of the second earl of Northumberland, ousted him from the property by force. Claxton retaliated by presenting a parliamentary petition to the effect that he could not gain legal remedy because of the earl's influence but royal justices failed to uphold his appeal. When Sir William died in 1431 Robert was left to grapple with the problem of recovering the estate. If an IPM had been held, it would have provided a catalyst to begin a new phase in the quarrel. It was a disappointing setback for Claxton but it was not the end of the matter.

The above exercise has demonstrated that the extent of the original archive contained in the calendars cannot be established through a reconciliation with writs entered on the *Fine Rolls*.⁶⁰ As an edited version of commands, the sources are inadequate for this

⁵⁸ However, in some instances IPMs were taken in other counties. For example, a Yorkshire IPM for John Colville is referenced at TNA: PRO, C 138/13/43.

⁵⁹ For the content of this paragraph see Barker, *Law and Disorder*, pp. 30-31.

⁶⁰ Recent work undertaken by the Inquisitions *Post Mortem* Project at Winchester has identified extant records that have not been calendared.

purpose and those that are enrolled cannot always be taken at face value. Moreover, these concise records offer no insight as to why a substantial number of writs appear to lack a response.

Tenancies were commonly acquired by descent, marriage or award, but those who held of a mesne lord might find themselves inadvertently thrust into the position if the estates were forfeit and retained by the crown, or the heir was a minor who became the king's ward.⁶¹ The IPMs of Henry Brampton, Alice Ravensworth and John Hawley, for example, state that their respective properties in Kenton and Riplington were formerly held of Henry, lord Scrope of Masham, executed for high treason in 1415.⁶²

All but two instructions to hold an IPM were issued from chancery and followed the standard procedure. The inquisition for Henry Brampton was held *ex-officio* (on the escheator's own authority by right of his office) rather than in response to a chancery writ, an event that required a return be made only to the exchequer.⁶³ Another, concerning Elizabeth Fenwick, circumvented the county escheator.⁶⁴ An initial investigation into her affairs had taken place two years earlier but its findings seem to have been questioned subsequently as this further inquiry was delegated to a special

⁶¹ On forfeiture see M. McGlynn, *The Royal Prerogative and the Learning of the Inns of Court* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 85. For an example relating to wardship, see *CFR*, 1413-22, p. 146.

⁶² *CIPM*, 1413-18, pp. 175-76 and *ibid.*, 1418-22, p. 166, respectively.

⁶³ Cf. Carpenter, 'Introduction', *CIPM*, 1422-27, p. 10.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 1418-22, p. 166.

commission, issued from chancery by letters patent.⁶⁵ One hundred and sixteen inquisitions were instigated by various categories of writ that had been developed to suit specific and recurring circumstances; just one slipped through the net as unclassified.⁶⁶ Most commands were delivered by a writ of *diem clausit extremum*. Three writs *devenerunt* were also generated, two for successive heirs of the Monboucher family and one for Philip, lord Darcy, which required the escheator to determine how lands had come to the crown following the death of a minor in the king's custody.⁶⁷ The purpose of these particular inquiries was to identify the next heir.⁶⁸ A mandate for Ralph Eure's inquisition illuminates an occasion where chancery retrieved germane material held within the archives.⁶⁹ The writ *mittimus* (we send) enclosed a copy of a record concerning property in Felton and Ponteland, that had been enrolled in chancery during the reign of Richard II, for the escheator's attention.⁷⁰

Escheators generally delivered an adequate return following an inquisition but some submissions proved unsatisfactory. Chancery generated fourteen directives demanding

⁶⁵ *CIPM*, 1405-13, pp. 242, 333. The commission reported that she held more lands than identified in the previous inquest.

⁶⁶ Noble, in Hicks, *Fifteenth-Century Inquisitions*, pp. 184-87, 195-98. For editorial practices regarding the classification of writs found in the IPM volumes, see J.L. Kirby, 'Preface' in *CIPM*, 1399-1405, p. v; *ibid.*, 1422-27, pp. 11-12. Nicholas Wymbyshh was by far the most active chancery clerk, responsible for attesting thirty-nine per cent of Northumberland writs; cf. Noble, in Hicks, *Fifteenth-Century Inquisitions*, p. 193.

⁶⁷ *CIPM*, 1418-22, pp. 107-8 (Darcy); *ibid.*, 1422-27, p. 535 (Bertram Monboucher, son of Bertram Monboucher); *ibid.*, p. 537 (Bertram Monboucher, son of Bertram Monboucher, son of Bertram Monboucher). This classification of writ was also used to investigate a tenant's mental state, see Carpenter, 'Introduction', *CIPM*, 1422-27, p. 12. For a detailed discussion, K. Parkin, 'Tales of Idiots, Signifying Something: Evidence of Process in the Inquisitions *Post Mortem*', in M. Hicks (ed.), *The Fifteenth-Century Inquisitions Post Mortem: A Companion* (Woodbridge, 2012), 79-95.

⁶⁸ Noble, in Hicks, *Fifteenth-Century Inquisitions*, p. 185.

⁶⁹ For other examples see Carpenter, 'Introduction', *CIPM*, 1422-27, p. 26.

⁷⁰ *CIPM*, 1418-22, pp. 350-51.

further attention. Twelve writs were classified as *melius sciri*, *melius inquirendo*, *melius certatori* or *plenius certatori*, which required greater explanation of information provided in a previous return or particulars that had been omitted from it.⁷¹ One such order highlighted a dating error as ‘the feast of St. Gregory the Martyr was unknown’ but the remainder concentrated on the main lines of investigation: the deceased’s estates and identification of the heir.⁷² A writ *melius inquirendo* for Helen Ogle requested more information about her property at Lorbottle and the amount of service.⁷³ The writ *melius sciri* for John Musgrave asked for a manorial extent of Heaton (a survey consisting of a description and valuation of the estate).⁷⁴ In the case of John Hawkswell a writ *plenius certatori* wanted the name of his successor.⁷⁵ The initial return stated that his heir was not known because his aunt Margaret, presumably his nearest relative, was a professed nun of the Benedictine convent of St. Bartholomew in Newcastle, an enclosed order.⁷⁶

Despite the defined framework of writs, inconsistencies do occur. The second writ produced for Sir John Heron, mentioned above, because the original order had not been served by the previous officer, was classified as a writ *melius sciri* yet this context called for a writ *amotus*.⁷⁷ A writ *melius sciri* was also issued for Margaret, widow of

⁷¹ Noble, in Hicks, *Fifteenth-Century Inquisitions*, p. 185.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ *CIPM*, 1405-13, p. 1.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 1418-22, p. 124.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 137. For this particular classification, Noble, in Hicks, *Fifteenth-Century Inquisitions*, pp. 198-99.

⁷⁶ *CIPM*, 1418-22, p. 137; E. Power, *Medieval English Nunneries, c.1275 to 1535* (Cambridge, 1922), p. 362.

⁷⁷ Noble, in Hicks, *Fifteenth-Century Inquisitions*, p. 184.

Patrick Sampson, but there is no record of a previous return.⁷⁸ Several documents concerning Elizabeth Fenwick demonstrate that inquiries could be made over a number of years. As noted previously, an IPM taken after Elizabeth's death in 1410 was followed by a commission of inquiry in 1412 but further investigations were also held in 1424 and 1426, the last by order of an unclassified writ.⁷⁹ The background to these proceedings surround the minority of Elizabeth's son and heir, Henry, and whether the crown's rights had been infringed.

Escheators were sometimes pressed for additional particulars but the calendars reveal that it was rare for chancery directly to challenge the information that had been received.⁸⁰ The only example is the writ *que plura* created in response to the findings of the inquisition for John Neville, lord Latimer, which stated it was known from other sources that the deceased held more land than specified.⁸¹ Ten new jurors were sworn for Latimer's second inquisition, which implies a renewed effort to provide an accurate return.

⁷⁸ *CIPM*, 1413-1418, pp. 120-21; *CFR*, 1413-22, p. 336.

⁷⁹ *CIPM*, 1422-27, pp. 318, 721-22, no. 813. The last inquisition was taken following information given by Henry himself, presumably to avoid potential difficulties concerning his inheritance.

⁸⁰ The *Patent Rolls* contain few instances where the veracity of returns were questioned on behalf of the crown or proven to be erroneous, and those that did arise tended to involve the succession of a minor. For example, *CPR*, 1405-08, p. 481 (Whitchester); *ibid.*, 1413-16, pp. 179, 220 (Darcy).

⁸¹ *CIPM*, 1427-32, p. 242.

Knights and gentry acted as county escheator, most of whom served for the standard year.⁸² The careers of nearly half of all post-holders during the first quarter of the century demonstrate that being in office of some sort was a paramount concern.⁸³ John Mitford, Robert Harbottle, Sir John Widdrington, Sir Robert Lisle, Sir John Bertram and Sir John Middleton, dominated the four major county positions of escheator, sheriff, JP and MP.⁸⁴ Indeed, some were so zealous to sustain their profile that they contravened the rules, though in this respect they were certainly not unique.⁸⁵ Moreover, the escheatry was not considered to be the lowest rung of the administrative ladder. Bertram, Harbottle and Lisle went back and forth between various official roles and almost as many men had held the shrievalty before becoming escheator as those who were pricked as sheriff at a later date. In general, escheators tended to serve most often as justices of the peace. The regular appointment of knights ended with the appointment of Sir John Middleton in November 1424, around the time that commissions of the peace began to gain greater significance.⁸⁶

⁸² Three men are identified as knights at their first time in office: Sir Robert Lisle, Sir John Widdrington and Sir John Middleton, *List of Escheators*, pp. 106-7. Modern biographies indicate that the actual number was five: John Bertram was knighted in May 1415 and William Carnaby by 1404, see Roskell et al., *HOC*, vol. 2, 211, 490. Widdrington had been knighted by 1402, although he is not recognized as such in *List of Escheators*, see Roskell et al., *HOC*, vol. 4, 853. For counties where very few or no knights took up this role see Acheson, *Leicestershire*, p. 112; Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, p. 269; Payling, *Political Society*, p. 113; Wright, *Derbyshire Gentry*, p. 5.

⁸³ However, it should be noted that some individuals wished to avoid public office or to conclude their service. For a local example, see *CPR*, 1399-1401, p. 509.

⁸⁴ Roskell et al., *HOC*, vol. 1, 539-45; *CPR*, 1399-1401, p. 562; *ibid.*, 1401-05, p. 518; *ibid.*, 1405-08, p. 495; *ibid.*, 1408-13, p. 484; *ibid.*, 1413-16, p. 422; 1416-22, p. 457; *ibid.*, 1422-29, p. 567.

⁸⁵ Roskell et al., *HOC*, vol. 1, 540. Mitford, Harbottle and Bertram flouted a parliamentary statute by being pricked as sheriff whilst a serving MP. For an example from another county see Payling, *Political Society*, pp. 114-15.

⁸⁶ Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 267-72.

Thereafter, the familiar appraisal that the escheator was a minor figure in relation to other major officers gained ground.⁸⁷ Continuity with the past was not entirely absent but it was fleeting. Sir John Widdrington's son and heir, Roger, and Sir John Bertram's illegitimate son, Edward, followed in their fathers' footsteps during the 1430s, though only for a single term, and while Bertram returned to the office, it was not until almost twenty years later in 1452.⁸⁸ Lesser men stepped in to fill the void. For the vast majority the escheatry was their only key appointment. John Heron was one of the few who went on to serve in other capacities, generally as an MP, and the only man that eventually held all four major offices within the county again.⁸⁹ Some escheators were in post longer than the standard year. William Strother of Bolton acted for more than four years, taking the place of successive escheators who failed to account, and Robert Rhodes was in post for three consecutive years from November 1434 to 1437.⁹⁰

A number of escheators were experienced administrators who also held high office in Newcastle.⁹¹ Laurence Acton was selected as escheator for Northumberland in November 1431, the only county position that he held, but he juggled this responsibility alongside his work as the town's MP and its mayor for the second time.⁹² Prior to his

⁸⁷ For example, Brown, *Governance*, p. 145; Harriss, *Shaping the Nation*, p. 166; Carpenter, 'Introduction', *CIPM*, 1422-27, p. 8.

⁸⁸ *List of Escheators*, pp. 107-8. For Widdrington see *HOC*, vol. 4, 853; for Bertram see Roskell et al., *HOC*, vol. 2, 214.

⁸⁹ Heron was appointed as escheator in 1439; sheriff of Northumberland 1440/1, 1451/2, 1456/7; sheriff of Northumberland 1440/1, 1451/2, 1456/7; MP in 1442, 1445, 1449 and JP in 1460, see *List of Escheators*, p. 107; *List of Sheriffs*, p. 98; Hunter Blair. 'MPs for Northumberland', 106-9; *CPR*, 1452-61, p. 673.

⁹⁰ *List of Escheators*, p.107.

⁹¹ For example, see Tuck, in Newton and Pollard, *Newcastle and Gateshead*, pp. 122-28.

⁹² *List of Escheators*, p. 107; Hunter Blair 'Mayors and Lord Mayors of Newcastle', 14.

selection as escheator for Northumberland in 1433, Edward Bertram had been sheriff of Newcastle and one of Acton's colleagues.⁹³ Some men acquired specialist knowledge through a professional career. Robert Whelpington and Robert Rhodes were both lawyers who had already served as MP for Newcastle.⁹⁴ Robert Wetwang had held a lower rank in local government as a searcher of ships in Newcastle and along the north-eastern coast.⁹⁵ John Beer possessed relevant skills too but they had been developed elsewhere as customer of Berwick and receiver of the castle and lordship of Bamburgh.⁹⁶

Escheators might expect to conduct between one and three inquisitions *post mortem* during a term of office but the random nature of mortality meant that there was no guarantee. The escheatry was at its busiest during March to October 1422 but it was hardly a demanding period, resulting in seven new IPMs and two supplementary proceedings. In practice, an escheator's responsibilities commenced and terminated a little later than the dates of appointment enrolled on the *Fine Rolls* suggest. Edward Bertram, for example, conducted an IPM for Joan Bromflete on 3 November 1434, the same day that Robert Rhodes was identified as his replacement.⁹⁷ Time was needed for the new escheator to be sworn before an official hand-over could take place, which seems to have taken between two to three weeks. William Strother of Bolton accounted

⁹³ Hunter Blair, 'Mayors and Lord Mayors of Newcastle', 15.

⁹⁴ Idem, 'MPs for Newcastle', 37-38, 44-45, respectively.

⁹⁵ *CFR*, 1437-45, p. 16. Probably the same man later described as 'of Berwick, marchant', *ibid.*, p. 212.

⁹⁶ *CPR*, 1441-46, pp. 206, 219, 235. Later a commissioner to victual Roxburgh, *ibid.*, p. 390. Almost certainly the same man styled 'gentleman of Dunstanburgh' in 1446, see *CFR*, 1445-52, p. 23; deputy of Dunstanburgh from 1450-51, Somerville, *Duchy of Lancaster*, vol. 1, 558.

⁹⁷ *CFR*, 1430-37, p. 222.

for the issues of office (the receipt of goods and lands taken into his possession) from 1426 to 12 November 1430, although John Cartington was granted the role on 5 November 1430.⁹⁸ John Fenwick conducted an IPM for Alice Gabefore at Corbridge on 20 November 1439, fifteen days after the position was awarded to John Heron.⁹⁹ Likewise, Thomas Weldon accounted from 1443 to 20 November 1445, sixteen days after Robert Wetwang's promotion on 4 November 1445.¹⁰⁰ Another example must have a different explanation. A writ ordering an IPM for Sir Ralph Grey, dated 3 April 1443, was addressed to William Heron of Shipley and executed by him at Newcastle on 15 June following, even though Robert Rhodes (d. 1474) had apparently succeeded him seven months previously on 6 November 1442.¹⁰¹

Chancery certainly had a very modern concept of the working week, since writs *diem clausit extremum* were quite often dated on a Sunday.¹⁰² These writs are distributed across a number years, which indicates that this was not a temporary measure but part of its normal operation. It was not, however, a fifteenth-century innovation as the same practice can be found during the late 1320s.¹⁰³ County escheators were disinclined to follow suit: only two IPMs were conducted on the Sabbath.¹⁰⁴ Writs for tenants with

⁹⁸ *List of Escheators*, p. 107.

⁹⁹ *CIPM*, 1437-42, p. 100; *CFR*, 1437-45, pp. 129-30.

¹⁰⁰ *CFR*, 1445-52, p. 9.

¹⁰¹ *CIPM*, 1442-47, pp. lv, 61-66; *CFR*, 1437-45, pp. 241; *List of Escheators*, p. 107.

Unfortunately, no additional IPMs were taken during this period to enable further investigation.

¹⁰² For example, *CIPM*, 1399-1405, p. 6; *ibid.*, 1413-18, p. 163; *ibid.*, 1418-22, p. 121; *ibid.*, 1427-32, p. 100; *ibid.*, 1432-37, pp. 483-84; *ibid.*, 1437-42, pp. 121-22. Writs dated on a Sunday ordering the delivering of seisin were less frequent, for example, *CIPM*, 1418-22, p. 124; *ibid.*, 1427-32, pp. 363-66.

¹⁰³ See *CIPM*, 1327-36, p. 119 (George Meriet); *ibid.*, p. 332 (Henry Husee).

¹⁰⁴ *CIPM*, 1399-1405, p. 64; *ibid.*, 1432-37, pp. 480-82.

property in more than one county were handled at the same time, and all bar one were dated the same day.¹⁰⁵ At the peak of efficiency the timescale from date of writ *diem clausit extremum* to the date of writ of seisin was seventeen days and, at worst, one-thousand, five-hundred and seventy-two.

Inquisitions *post mortem* are a convenient resource to assist in calculating the length of time an heir may wait to receive their inheritance but they cannot provide a complete account of events. In some instances information relating to key stages in the process simply does not exist. How and when chancery received news of a tenant's death that instigated the production of a writ *diem clausit extremum* is not known.¹⁰⁶ The dates that county escheators received chancery writs are also indeterminate. Writs ordering 'livery of seisin' appear in the *Fine and Close Rolls* but there are no extant records that record the date on which these orders were actually executed. It is possible, though, to consider three fixed documented points - the date a writ *diem clausit extremum* was dated; the date that an initial inquest was taken; and the date of the writ ordering delivery of seisin - to discover the number of days that elapsed between each phase and the overall amount of time from the beginning of the documented process to its end.

This section of the chapter charts the progress of fifty-five writs *diem clausit extremum* (*dce*) taken for Northumbrian tenants-in-chief calendared between 1399 and 1447 that resulted in an award of seisin to the deceased's partner, an adult heir/heiress or any co-

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 1399-1405, pp. 129-30.

¹⁰⁶ Carpenter, 'Introduction', *CIPM*, 1422-27, p. 16.

heirs/heiresses, feoffees or grantees as documented in the *Fine* and *Close Rolls* within a particular reign.¹⁰⁷ The criteria provides a basis for a sensible analysis of routine administration as it provides a more comprehensive view of the process than an examination restricted to heirs and it avoids any extreme delays that would distort the calculation of average timescales.

Table 4. Progress of selected Northumberland IPMs, 1399-1447.

Reign	Average number of days from date of writ <i>dce</i> to date of execution	Average number of days from date <i>dce</i> executed to date of writ of seisin	Average total days
H IV	106	195	301
H V	52	49	101
H VI	60	94	154

The weakest performance in terms of the duration of the process was in the time of Henry IV. By comparison, it took around six and half months longer to complete the procedure during his reign than that of his son and around four months longer than that during the reign of his grandson. The system worked most efficiently under Henry V. The figures for each phase during his reign are almost equal, which suggests that crown administration was working at an optimum level in terms of relaying and acting upon information received. In the first phase chancery produced a writ for an inquisition and dispatched it to the county for action; the second phase operated in reverse, with the

¹⁰⁷ Full details are provided within the appendices.

county transmitting the findings of an inquisition to chancery for action in the production of a writ of seisin. During the reign of Henry VI the timescale for completion increased considerably from the level achieved in his father's era. The detail of the two phases shows that the time taken between the date that the writ was executed to the date of seisin almost doubled, but it is impossible to isolate the location of the delay. Escheators may have been slower in making their returns or chancery may have taken longer to produce the writ of seisin.

Clearly, there were times when the duration of the process was outside the direct control of chancery or the escheator. It took almost three years to complete the administration for William, son and heir of Henry Heton. William was a minor at his death on 27 September 1401, leaving his three sisters as co-heiresses to his estate that had been taken into the crown's hand. A writ to hold his inquisition was dated 12 February 1404, when his eldest sister, Joan, was a little older than the minimum age to legally succeed to part of her late brother's estate. Joan was then fifteen and married to Robert Rutherford. Her siblings, Elizabeth and Margaret, were still minors aged twelve and nine respectively. There was a long interval thereafter as a writ for proof of age for Joan, and her sister Elizabeth who had also married by then, was dated June 1407.¹⁰⁸ The delay was the result of a local wrangle over rights of lordship and specifically the wardship of Heton's daughters that was taken to court in 1407 for a judicial decision.¹⁰⁹ Presumably, a writ for proof of age had not been sued out at an earlier stage as a

¹⁰⁸ *CIPM*, 1405-13, pp. 114-15. Note that the date of writ noted in the calendar is erroneous; cf. TNA: PRO, C 137/64, no.82.

¹⁰⁹ Roskell et al., *HOC*, vol. 3, 225.

safeguard against the challenge, which left the estate in the hands of the crown. The first award of seisin to one of William's sisters was made in January 1408.¹¹⁰ If this particular record was disregarded, the duration of the process under Henry IV would still remain the lengthiest of any king.¹¹¹

In order to assess the effect of distance, the figures achieved in Northumberland have been compared against those for the southern county of Berkshire, shown in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1 Comparison of the Progress of selected IPMs
for Northumberland and Berkshire, 1399-1447.

Reign	County	Average number of days from date of writ <i>dce</i> to date of execution	Average number of days from date of execution to date of writ of seisin	Average total days
H IV	Northumberland	106	195	301
	Berkshire	22	48	70
H V	Northumberland	52	49	101
	Berkshire	35	80	115
H VI	Northumberland	60	94	154
	Berkshire	57	41	98

Note: This comparison is based on the following number of returns for Northumberland: 18 in H IV; 12 in H V and 25 in H VI. For Berkshire: 15 in H IV; 11 in H V; 34 in Henry VI.

¹¹⁰ Seisin was initially granted to William's middle sister, Elizabeth, and her husband John Park, *CCR*, 1405-09, pp. 303-5. His elder sister Joan and her husband were not awarded seisin until July 1409, *ibid.*, 1405-09, pp. 449-55. For a discussion of fealty and homage in relation to the Heton estate see Hicks, 'Crossing Generations', in *idem* (ed.), *Fifteenth Century Inquisitions*, p. 40.

¹¹¹ Total average days would reduce to 214.

This function of royal administration was not at its worst in either county during the reign of Henry VI, a finding that offers a revision of Carpenter's assessment summarised above.¹¹² In Northumberland the duration of the process was lengthiest under Henry IV whereas in Berkshire it was the shortest of any reign. The figures for the total number of days for both counties under Henry V are close but the timescale for Berkshire had actually increased by 45 days. As the best figure for Northumberland was 101 days and Berkshire 70, on average, the effect of distance on the whole process would appear to be 31 days, a month. Since information was communicated between locality and centre twice during the process, each phase took an additional 15 days to complete in relation to Northumberland.

Was there a significant change in the duration of the process after the introduction of the statute of 1429? The aggregated figures shown in Table 4.1. for the reign of Henry VI have been separated by date as shown Table 4.2 and Table 4.3 below to illustrate the position before and after Easter 1430 when the statute came into effect.

¹¹² See p. 152 above.

Table 4.2. Comparison of the Progress of selected IPMs for Northumberland and Berkshire 1422-Easter 1430.¹¹³

Reign	County	Average number of days from date of writ <i>dce</i> to date of execution	Average number of days from date of execution to date of writ of seisin	Average total days
H VI	Northumberland	61	159	220
	Berkshire	53	52	105

Note: This comparison is based on 6 returns for Northumberland and 16 for Berkshire during the period.

Table 4.3 Comparison of the Progress of selected IPMs for Northumberland and Berkshire, post-Easter 1430 to 1447.

Reign	County	Average number of days from date of writ <i>dce</i> to date of execution	Average number of days from date of execution to date of writ of seisin	Average total days
H VI	Northumberland	61	73	134
	Berkshire	60	31	91

Note: This comparison is based on 18 returns from both counties.

The comparison illustrates that the introduction of the statute did have the desired effect. In Northumberland the average duration was reduced by approximately three months, which implies that escheators had been dilatory in the past. In Berkshire the reduction was approximately two weeks. The hypothesis made earlier that the effect of

¹¹³ Easter, a moveable feast, fell on 16 April 1430.

distance was around a month is extended by around two weeks in this period, to six weeks in total.

This exercise has supported Rees Davies' view that 'medieval government was less uniform .than *étatist* story-lines presupposes'.¹¹⁴ Following routine records relating to IPM processes has provided a more nuanced interpretation of the notion of distance between locality and centre. Royal administration was not monolithic but moved at different rates under Lancastrian kingship, which to some extent would have shaped local perceptions of the proximity and authority of the crown. Northumbrian landed society was most isolated in this respect during the reign of Henry IV, when the successors of tenants-in-chief waited on average almost a year to secure their properties. Yet, as the efficiency of the IPM process during the reign of Henry V demonstrates, Northumberland was essentially no more difficult to govern than the southern county of Berkshire, IPMs took just a little longer to expedite.

¹¹⁴ Cited by Frame, in Prestwich, *Liberties and Identities*, p. 8.

7

Jurors

James Masschaele has charted the development of the jury system and shown how the rapid expansion of royal government from the thirteenth century created such a demand for jurors that supply could only be met by lowering the social threshold for service.¹ Further research by Matthew Holford into the composition of IPM juries, drawn largely from Berkshire, has provided some useful benchmarks for comparison.² Knights and esquires were rarely present at local inquisitions, nor were men from the lower reaches of society. Those who did attend, the ‘middling sort’ were called infrequently with most jurors appearing only once or twice.³ But the pattern is not a uniform fit. Contrasts have been noted in the frequency of jurors serving at IPMs in Somerset, Dorset, the west country and Northumberland, thus creating a need ‘to know more about such local variations, how they relate to administrative practice, and whether they reflect significant differences in local political society’.⁴ This chapter is a response to that call.

The following discussion concentrates on Northumbrian IPM juries between 1422 and 1447. It does not incorporate jurors sworn at proofs of age.⁵ An obvious question needs

¹ J. Masschaele, *Jury, State and Society in Medieval England* (New York, 2008).

² Holford, ‘Thrifty Men’, in Hicks, *Fifteenth-Century Inquisitions*, pp. 201-21. All references to this author hereafter are to this particular chapter.

³ Ibid., pp. 214-18.

⁴ Ibid., p. 220.

⁵ Of the nine proofs of age for taken for heirs to Northumbrian estates taken during this timescale just two are germane. Five proofs relate to heirs born at Newcastle, which may well

to be asked initially: did the named jurors actually attend an IPM? Although a statute of 34 Edward III required the findings of an inquisition to be indented to prove a jury had been present, academics have expressed some doubt as to whether this requirement was still germane in the fifteenth century.⁶ A record of contemporary document, hitherto overlooked in recent studies of the escheator, brings an end to the uncertainty. Escheators were still obliged to make an indented return; and the stipulation appears in a copy of the escheator's oath created in response to the statute of 1429.⁷

More than a quarter of all Northumberland IPMs taken between 1422-47 comply with the requirement of the new statute, which includes almost every inquisition held for men of the peerage.⁸ Though the majority of documents are not indented, it cannot be assumed that jurors were therefore excluded from the process. A number of possible scenarios have been put forward in explanation.⁹ Moreover, it is impossible to tell whether IPMs held at the TNA that are now unindented were also so. Seals were subsequently removed at the TNA and the indented portion may also have been detached.¹⁰ That said, an indented return is not in itself unassailable proof that a jury attended an inquisition. The *Paston Letters* relate an instance where an IPM had not

have determined the selection of jurors to some extent, and another two (for Lumley and Ord) are extremely suspect, see pp. 102-3 above.

⁶ Carpenter, 'Introduction', *CIPM*, 1422-27, p. 23; Hicks, 'Introduction', in idem (ed.), *Fifteenth-Century Inquisitions*, p. 22.

⁷ *English Constitutional Documents, 1307-1485*, ed. E.C. Lodge and G.A. Thornton (Cambridge, 1935), pp. 357-58. This material is not referenced in Hicks (ed.), *Fifteenth-Century Inquisitions*, p. 22 or in Carpenter, 'Introduction', *CIPM*, 1422-27, pp. 11, 23.

⁸ The IPM for John, duke of Bedford, is an exception. IPMs were indented for Henry Beauchamp, duke of Warwick; Richard Beauchamp, earl of Warwick; Henry, lord Fitzhugh; John, lord Greystoke and Ralph Neville, earl of Westmorland.

⁹ Carpenter, 'Introduction', *CIPM*, 1422-27, p. 23.

¹⁰ I am grateful to Matthew Holford and Michael Hicks for making this point.

been taken but credibility was given to the pretence in the submission of an indented return.¹¹

A few local IPMs suggest that malpractice was more widespread. As Michael Hicks has pointed out, Sir John Widdrington (d. 1444) cannot have held the manor of Widdrington (and other properties) of Henry, lord Scrope of Upsal, because the latter was executed for treason in 1415.¹² This error, though, could be perceived as a minor oversight as Widdrington actually held of John, lord Scrope of Masham and Upsal (d. 1455), who succeeded to his disgraced elder brother's title and estates in 1426.¹³ Further examination of the return identifies that Scrope is not the only deceased landlord to be named. Widdrington apparently had lands in Cresswell and Ellington of John, lord Welles, who died in 1421.¹⁴ Three waste husbandlands in Newton-on-the-Moor were also supposedly held of Sir John Hastings, dead since June 1440.¹⁵

The IPM for Sir Robert Ogle (d. 1436), likewise indented, makes numerous references to Henry Percy of Atholl as his landlord, but Percy had died four years before, and that the manor of Unthank was held of Philip, lord Darcy, though he was buried in 1418.¹⁶ Ogle's inquisition was one of two submitted by the county escheator, Robert Rhodes,

¹¹ Holford, in Hicks, *Fifteenth Century Inquisitions*, pp. 203-4.

¹² *CIPM*, 1442-47, pp. 131-33;

<http://www.winchester.ac.uk/academicdepartments/history/research/inquisitions/historicalimportance/makingipm/Pages/TheSourcesforExtents.aspx> .

¹³ *HN*, vol. 2, (1), 373.

¹⁴ The IPM taken for Welles states that he held only the reversion of Ellington, *CIPM*, 1418-22, p. 307.

¹⁵ *CIPM*, 1437-42, pp. 386-87; *NCH*, vol. 7, 130.

¹⁶ *CIPM*, 1432-37, p. 480.

that were taken on the same day at Newcastle; the other was for John, lord Greystoke.¹⁷ Did Rhodes, perhaps, in reality only take one IPM for Greystoke? Possibly not even that since Greystoke's IPM also details that he too held land of Atholl. If the indented IPMs reviewed above are fictitious local residents must have connived with the escheator by applying their seals. Moreover, it also raises some uncertainty about the involvement of the sheriff who should have summoned a jury.

Where a jury was present, its role was to endorse the findings of the IPM rather than to supply information.¹⁸ As jurors were predominantly drawn from the middling sorts it is doubtful the panel would be able to recite the level of detail concerning the settlement of land found in the records, and incidents have been noted where 'interested parties' had a hand in the process.¹⁹ IPMs were most likely to have been informed by the family of the deceased, perhaps with the assistance of estate officials and legal advisers.²⁰ Whilst the jury at the initial IPM for John Hawkswell failed to name his heir for want of information from the family, a subsequent inquisition proved more successful.²¹ On this occasion Hawkswell's heir was named as Sir William Heron and various genealogical relationships were given to support his claim, particulars that were almost certainly provided by Heron himself.²² It would be reasonable to assume that the important letters patent 'shown to the jurors' which pardoned John, lord Clifford, and

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 351-52.

¹⁸ Carpenter, 'Introduction', *CIPM*, 1422-27, pp. 20-22.

¹⁹ Holford, in Hicks, *Fifteenth-Century Inquisitions*, pp. 202-5.

²⁰ Carpenter, 'Introduction', *CIPM*, 1422-27, p. 20.

²¹ *CIPM*, 1418-22, p. 137.

²² Ibid. Although a completely different panel was summoned in August 1422 from that in December 1420, it seems unlikely that this jury would have been in a better position to offer such detail than the previous one.

his wife, Elizabeth, 'all gifts, alienations and acquisitions of land', were provided by the couple.²³ Close similarities in the various IPMs for the Duke of Bedford suggest that relevant information was assembled and concluded by one of his officials before being distributed to county escheators.²⁴ The majority of statements regarding his heir have an identical sentence structure and contain the term '*viz*'. Admittedly, the actual wording in the returns does differ but they essentially provide four descriptions of Bedford's heir, Henry VI, as 'our lord king', 'the current lord king', 'the most excellent prince and lord' and 'son of the illustrious' Henry V.

Whether items recorded as 'shown to jurors' were actually produced on the day is, perhaps, open to question. IPMs for William Tempest conducted in Northumberland and Yorkshire both refer to his charter, dated 1443, presented to the jury.²⁵ Tempest's Northumbrian IPM was held at Newcastle on 21 April 1444 followed by another taken at York three days later on 24 April. This document may well have been delivered to the inquisition at York since the names of the nine trustees are given in identical order in each return.²⁶ Then again, the Yorkshire escheator might simply have reproduced these details from sight of the Northumberland IPM. Was it a coincidence that both returns were delivered to chancery on the same day? Arrangements were certainly in place between some county officials for the return of documents. IPMs for Joan Neville held concurrently in Newcastle and Northumberland on 9 January 1441 were handed to

²³ Ibid., 1418-22, p. 346.

²⁴ Ibid., 1432-37, pp. 371-403.

²⁵ Ibid., 1442-47, pp. 122-23.

²⁶ Ibid. Two of the trustees, Robert Danby and Christopher Boynton, were lawyers so the charter may well have been drawn up by one of them, see Dobson, *Durham Priory*, p. 132; Liddy, *Bishopric of Durham*, p. 99.

chancery on the same date and on another occasion two IPMs for John Belasis were delivered simultaneously although the inquisitions were taken a month apart.²⁷

The IPM process was designed with transparency in mind. Inquisitions were to be held in ‘open places’.²⁸ County IPMs were arranged at eleven locations. Alnwick, Corbridge, Morpeth, and Newcastle were utilised throughout the period to varying degrees. The royal castle at Newcastle was by far the most frequently used venue, which no doubt added gravitas to the proceedings. Less often, inquisitions were held at market towns to the north and west of Newcastle. Morpeth was the base for seventeen gatherings, Alnwick, eight, and Corbridge in Tynedale, ten. Sites based north of the river Coquet, at Bamburgh, Rothbury, Wark-on-Tweed, Whittingham and Wooler, were chosen on just one or two occasions. Two IPMs were also conducted south of the river Tyne, at Newbiggin and Hart, for members of the aristocratic Beauchamp and Clifford families, whose lands the crown still regarded as part of Northumberland rather than the palatinate of Durham.²⁹ Unfortunately, IPMs taken outside the walls of the royal fortress at Newcastle do not specify the actual meeting place. The crown and substantial landholders may have made space available within major castle complexes at Alnwick, Bamburgh, Morpeth, Rothbury and Wark-on-Tweed but suitable

²⁷ *CIPM*, 1437-42, pp. 299-300, 436-37.

²⁸ *English Constitutional Documents*, ed. Lodge and Thornton, vol. 4, 358.

²⁹ *CIPM*, 1442-47, p. 258; *ibid.*, 1418-22, p. 346. For the background see Pollard, in Dockray and Fleming, *People, Politics and Perspectives*, pp. 69-78; *idem*, *North Eastern England*, p. 274; M. Hicks, ‘The Forfeiture of Barnard Castle to the Bishop of Durham in 1459’, *NH*, 33 (1997), 223-31.

accommodation would have been available in market towns and rooms may have been found at village inns.³⁰

As the popularity of Newcastle as a meeting place indicates, IPMs were not always held near the estates of the deceased.³¹ Thomas Heselrigg, for example, had held the manor of Eslington and half the vills of Whittingham, Thrunton and Barton, all within nine miles of Alnwick, but his inquisition was taken at Newcastle.³² Local jurors would therefore have faced a considerable trek to fulfil their duty, although any annoyance may have been mitigated a little by the opportunity to attend to a variety of private matters in the town.

It would be too simplistic to assume that these proceedings were either convened close to the tenant's lands or at Newcastle. William Young's sole estate was the manor of Throckley, approximately six-miles west of Newcastle, while his inquisition was held at Corbridge in Tynedale, twice that distance.³³ John Clavering had possessed the manors and vills of Calally and Yetlington, approximately eight and a half-miles west of Alnwick, and his IPM was held more than twenty-miles away to the south at

³⁰ C. Dyer, 'The Value of Fifteenth-Century Inquisitions *Post Mortem* for Social and Economic History', in M. Hicks (ed.), *The Fifteenth-Century Inquisitions Post Mortem: A Companion* (Woodbridge, 2012), p. 111. Almost a third of the total number of inquisitions held outside of Newcastle took place on the town's respective market day and the figure rises to a half for all those conducted at Morpeth, see S. Letters et al., *Gazetteer of Markets and Fairs in England and Wales to 1516*, 2 vols, List and Index Society Special Series 32-33 (Kew, 2003), vol. 2, 268-73.

³¹ Cf. Holford, in Hicks, *Fifteenth-Century Inquisitions*, p. 207.

³² *CIPM*, 1422-27, p. 87.

³³ *Ibid.*, 1413-18, p. 271.

Morpeth.³⁴ Some IPMs are notable because the selected locations were even further away from the late occupier's property, which seems totally bizarre. Eleanor Ask had held a third of the manor of Jesmond but her IPM was executed more than thirty miles north of there at Alnwick.³⁵ Emma Craster's holdings consisted of the manor of Dilston and property at Corbridge in the west of the county.³⁶ Nevertheless, her IPM was conducted at Morpeth in the east, which even by the most direct route, as the crow flies, is some forty miles. It has been suggested that detached arrangements, such as those noted above, were probably made for the convenience of the escheator.³⁷

Forty-eight IPM returns taken between 1422-47 name 583 sworn jurors, of which five entries are missing in part.³⁸ How many individuals were actually involved is hard to say. Ascertaining an exact number is difficult because of general problems surrounding the identification of individuals and different methods can be applied to a count.³⁹ The status of jurors is rarely provided and their place of residence tends only to be given where two people of the same name attended an inquisition, doubtless to avoid the repetition being perceived as a mistake.⁴⁰ In addition to these general difficulties the lack of manorial records relating to the county is a significant disadvantage in any attempt to make an identification from the lower orders. In an effort to overcome at

³⁴ Ibid., pp. 600-1.

³⁵ Ibid., 1427-32, p. 100.

³⁶ Ibid., 1399-1405, p. 64.

³⁷ Holford, in Hicks, *Fifteenth-Century Inquisitions*, p. 207.

³⁸ A return for Alice Gabefore has been excluded since no jurors are identified, *CIPM*, 1437-42, p. 100. Returns for the Clifford and Beauchamp families have also been excluded to consider the conventional area of the county.

³⁹ Holford, in Hicks, *Fifteenth-Century Inquisitions*, p. 206, fn.19.

⁴⁰ For example, see *CIPM*, 1422-27, p. 196, where John Mitford of Ponteland and John Mitford of Nunhouse are identified.

least some of these issues this discussion takes a narrower field by considering the jurors present at inquisitions from 1428 to 1436, a shorter period that leaves less margin for error but still enables the use of county tax returns.

Fifteen IPMs were taken between 1428 and 1436 with one hundred and eighty jurors identified in the records. Four entries are imperfect, leaving a total of one hundred and seventy-six names, which appear to relate to one hundred individuals.⁴¹ Twelve jurors were generally sworn for an IPM but one panel consisted of just ten men and another fourteen.⁴² Table 5 shows the total number of inquisitions upon which jurors served, based on one hundred participants, and the corresponding number of ‘seats’ occupied.⁴³

Table 5. IPM Juror Service in Northumberland between 1428 and 1436.

No. of Inquisitions Served	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven	Total
No. Individuals	67	15	6	5	2	4	1	100
No. Seats Occupied	67	30	18	20	10	24	7	176
Seats (%)	38	17	10	11	6	14	4	100

⁴¹ While the actual number of individuals may have been slightly higher, it would not significantly alter the findings below.

⁴² *CIPM*, 1422-27, pp. 722-23, no. 813; *ibid.*, 1442-47, pp. 125-26, no. 217 respectively.

⁴³ Following the same measure employed by Holford, in Hicks, *Fifteenth-Century Inquisitions*, p. 219. I have counted juror appearances separately to compare actual levels of participation.

The arrangement of juror service in the Northumberland returns does not entirely correspond with the findings of Matthew Holford's broader study, where an average of 70 per cent of individuals appeared once, 30 per cent appeared two or three times and 1-2 per cent of the total number appeared four times or more.⁴⁴ Although the proportion of jurors who attended up to three times is comparable, a greater number (12 per cent) were present at four or more inquisitions. This frequent activity not only separates Northumbrian IPM jurors from others but also their counterparts at gaol deliveries, where regular attendance was roughly similar to the averages noted above by Holford.⁴⁵ The level of repeated service was not constant but fluctuated over time. During this short period the percentage of jurors attending four or more IPMs was lower than the average observed over a longer term when 17 per cent of their countrymen performed the same duty.⁴⁶ The people selected four or more times were numerically a minority but their combined commitments gave them a disproportionate say at local inquisitions. Representing 12 per cent of all jurors, these individuals occupied sixty-one seats, more than a third of the one hundred and seventy-six places available.⁴⁷

Sir Robert Ogle (d. 1469) was the only knight that acted as a juror within this timescale but it is worthy of note that another four, Sir Thomas Grey, Sir Robert Harbottle, Sir William Lumley and Sir John Widdrington, served at other times. There is also justification for the belief that knights were present at IPMs and criminal trials in

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 216.

⁴⁵ Ibid., fn.76.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 220.

⁴⁷ The level of repeated service was influenced by the selection of the same panel for the IPMs of John, lord Greystoke and Sir Robert Ogle, held at Newcastle on 7 October 1436.

particular circumstances.⁴⁸ Such occurrences may well suggest intervention on their part. Ogle's presence at the IPM of Joan Bromflete, widow of Edmund of Langley, duke of York, is explained by a family connection.⁴⁹ Other knights attended in situations where landed estates had fallen to minors or when the heir had recently turned the age of majority. Lumley and Harbottle were both sworn at the IPM of Sir John Hastings whose son, Edmund, was not yet in his teens.⁵⁰ A few years later Lumley returned as a juror at the IPM of William Tempest, whose heir was still an infant.⁵¹ Widdrington and Grey were present at the IPM of William Mitford, whose son was reported as having reached twenty-one years of age two months previously.⁵²

The frequency of service at IPMs was uncharacteristic and so too was the social range from which jurors were drawn. Almost a quarter of the total number were gentry by economic standards. Fourteen jurors were taxed on an annual income of £10 or more in 1436. As Northumbrians do not appear to have been charged on all profits, the four men taxed at less than £10 in 1436 should probably be added to this number. Another four held half a knight's fee in 1428, equivalent to £10. Three more held a position that demanded at least this level of income or was associated with the gentry. Taking a wider sweep, three jurors were commissioners in 1428 and styled gentlemen. Seven more were of sufficient station that they were required to take the oath to keep the

⁴⁸ Holford, in Hicks, *Fifteenth-Century Inquisitions*, p. 208.

⁴⁹ *CIPM*, 1432-37, p. 192. Roskell et al., *HOC*, vol. 3, 860.

⁵⁰ *CIPM*, 1437-42, p. 387.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 1442-47, p. 122.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 1422-27, p. 153.

king's peace in 1434. In short, almost a third of jurors can be accounted for as members of landed society without looking very hard.

An assumption that these jurors were on the lower margins of gentility would not be entirely accurate; some men were positioned at this level, a considerable number were not. William Lawson was typical of the parish gentry who acted as tax collectors, jurors and coroners. Robert Musgrave was one of seven men whose status was recorded as an esquire in 1436 and Thomas Lilburn was not alone in having served as knight of the shire.⁵³ The participation of the gentry in jury service is unusual in itself, but that it regularly cut across the spectrum would make it all the more remarkable. The lesser sorts, of whom by nature one knows far less, made up the remainder of jurors. and they may well have been better represented in other forums.

Northumbrian IPMs suggest that political society had not developed in the same way as that found in more southerly areas studied by Holford. If the county records are to be believed, the presence of a significant number of gentry jurors restricted the participation of lesser men to engage with the crown. In contrast, political society in the southern counties was more inclusive as jurors were typically drawn from the middling sorts. If the records prove to be fictitious, the frequent naming of gentry jurors implies an out-dated conception of the extent of political society since the social composition of juries had moved on.

⁵³ *CPR*, 1429-36, p. 396; Hunter Blair, 'MPs for Northumberland', 103.

Conclusion

This research resists the characterization of the county of Northumberland as fundamentally feudal, landed society impoverished, the county inherently lawless, and as a result of its distance from Westminster, almost impossible for the crown to administer. The picture that has emerged is much more subtle, with elements of graduation within each aspect.

In terms of seigneurial lordship, it could be said that based on the 1428 assessment of knights' fees, the county was not as feudal as Nottingham or Richmondshire. Few direct comparisons can be made but Northumberland was probably no more or less feudal than anywhere else during the first half of the century. Seigneurial lordship was significant within the liberties and without. The county had around ninety exclusive tenants who held land in-chief or another similar form and more than two-thirds of this number had a sole attachment to noble or gentry landlords. Henry Percy dominated the county with the largest individual share although his following was concentrated geographically. But the Percies were more successful in gaining the support of the local gentry against the Scots than they were in opposition to the crown or in their private confrontations with the Nevilles. Nevertheless, the gentry looked to the earl of Northumberland for the settlement of their own disputes and the extant records suggest a high level of intervention. Following the death of the first earl of Northumberland in 1408 the traditional focus of local peace-keeping was temporarily lost. Whilst

seignorial power in land and office was subject to the king's grace, it generally continued at his will.

There was no social division as such between lords and gentry, they were of one class. From the limited records available, the landed were largely like those in any other part of the realm in their family lives, personal relationships and management of their estates, except perhaps the need for monumental effigies. But the threat of cross-border conflict made Northumberland an insecure place to live. In this regard, the county was more backward than the peaceful, more southerly parts of the country. Yet, as the documents relating to dower arrangements illustrate, local residents still assumed stability and made specific provision for Scottish raids.

IPM records indicate that the structure of political society was more backward than elsewhere in the sense of its traditional structure. McFarlane noted that the 'tenacious conservatism' of the northern counties created small office-holding communities but this frame of mind had a greater impact.¹ It can also be observed in the appointment of knightly escheators during the first quarter of the century and the participation of gentry jurors at IPMs, positions that were usually held by lesser men in other parts of the country. While it may, perhaps, be argued that appointments to the escheatry were probably the result of a lack of qualified men in a sparsely populated shire, it cannot be the case that the gentry served as jurors because there were too few men of the middling sort.

¹ McFarlane, *England in the Fifteenth Century*, pp. 3-4.

It has been difficult to assess the true wealth of resident landholders, and thus whether they can be considered as impoverished. Taken at face value, taxation records reveal that the county was comparatively poor and that there was a significant economic divide between the peerage and lesser landowners but in comparative terms Northumbrian knights were better off than many of the same status elsewhere in the country. However, it would appear that the county was not as disadvantaged as it may seem since various charges, including annuities, do not seem to have been made. As any allowance would have been of greatest benefit to the wealthiest, their yearly incomes were surely higher than those stated. On the other hand, any reduction would have had little if any financial significance for minor landowners. That so few were recorded in the tax return suggests that this section of landed society, the greater part, was impoverished.

The disputes between Ogle and Bertram and later Heron and Manners have been regarded as examples of a lawless society.² But Northumberland was not the only part of the realm with a reputation for lawlessness.³ Ogle's attack on Bothal with an army of two-hundred men was an exceptional exercise in might over right but it was also a carefully planned and managed assault. The men he deployed were firmly under his control and posed no serious threat to others. On the other hand, the armed conflict between the Heron and Manners families that resulted in fatalities appears to have been

² Storey, *Thomas Langley*, pp. 142-43.

³ H. Kleineke, 'Why the West was Wild: Law and Disorder in Fifteenth-Century Cornwall and Devon', in L. Clark (ed.), *The Fifteenth Century III: Authority and Subversion* (Woodbridge 2003), pp. 75-93.

a spontaneous attack. These incidents were the exception rather than the rule. Quarrels within the county and those that crossed the border, were usually contained individually by negotiation or collectively through the process of arbitration. Armstrong was right to conclude that arbitration was a 'regular first stop in the disputing process in the English marches'.⁴ Given the lack of associated court records, it would seem that it was also the last stop for many. Little use was made of the central courts of law by commoners outside the liberties or the crown. Few disputes were heard in the court of common pleas, reflecting a broader trend for the north of England. Records of cases sent up to king's bench tell a similar story. Yet, the residents of the northern counties were less disorderly than Yorkshire and of the border counties Northumberland was less unruly than Cumberland or Westmorland. The king's law may have been exercised infrequently, but that is not to say Northumberland was therefore lawless and ungovernable.

Although the county of Northumberland was separated from Westminster by over 300 miles, the relationship could often be conceived as much closer. The sheriff's county tax return implies a financial concession was made, and the demand for state revenue was of secondary importance. In the deteriorating climate of Anglo-Scottish affairs during 1435/6, Northumbrians and the crown would have had a primary and mutual interest in the safeguard of the realm from a foreign foe. And, while information concerning IPMs travelled between two static points, in practical terms Northumberland apart from the liberties was much nearer to the centre when Henry V

⁴ Armstrong, thesis, p. 299.

wore the crown. Royal authority was justified by the king's special relationship with God'.⁵ On an earthly plane the relationship extended to God's church, its huge operational network and dedicated personnel. The offices of the church brought Westminster nearer than its geographical position would suggest.

The notion of distance between Northumberland, Westminster and the crown as a constant, fixed in geographical miles, is a rudimentary measure. It was a fluid consciousness that existed in the mind's eye. Because, above all, Northumberland was a geographical shape-shifter: it was the county of the 'far' north, a 'hybrid' north that encompassed Durham, and the 'near' north, the vestige of Anglo-Saxon Northumbria, in different contexts. It would therefore be wrong to assume that Hunsdon's comment, made in 1569 during the rising of the northern earls, that 'Northumberland knows no prince but a Percy' can be applied retrospectively.⁶

⁵ Hicks, *English Political Culture*, p. 22.

⁶ Cited in Pollard, *North-Eastern England*, p. 402.

APPENDIX 1

Persons Required to Take an Oath to the Crown, 1434

Source: *CPR*, 1429-36, p. 396.

John Bertram, knight
 William Elmden, knight
 Ralph Grey, knight
 John Manners, knight
 John Middleton, knight
 Robert Ogle the elder, knight
 Robert Ogle the younger, knight
 William Swinburne, knight
 Robert Umfraville, knight
 Matthew Whitfield, knight

Laurence Acton
 Thomas Blenkinsop
 James Buck of Morpeth
 William Carnaby
 John Chester
 Lionel Chester
 William Clavell [Clennell]
 John Elrington
 Thomas Elwick
 John Errington
 Gilbert Errington
 John Fenwick
 Richard Featherstonhaugh
 Thomas Grey of Horton
 Thomas Haggerston
 John Heron of Netherton

Nicholas Heron of Meldon
 John Horsley of Horsley
 Thomas Ilderton
 Richard Lilburn
 Robert Manners
 John Middleton
 Thomas Middleton
 William Muschamp
 John Park
 Robert Raymes
 Thomas Reed of Redesdale
 Gilbert Rutherford
 Roland Thirlwall
 John Trewick
 Roger Usher
 Edward Wetwang

APPENDIX 2

Commissioners' Certificate

Source: TNA, E 179/158/38 m.1

Northumberland: We, Ralph Gray, knight, John Bertram, knight, Robert Rhodes and John Cartyngton, to the barons of the Exchequer of the lord king, certify that by virtue of a certain commission of the same lord king directed to us and others, in the county of Northumberland, we have taken an inquisition and examinations of divers persons, who [are held] to the subsidy, contained in the said commission, the names and sums of which same persons are contained in certain indentures attached to this our certificate, the other part of which same indentures we have delivered to the sheriff, contained in the said commission, for the levying and payment of the aforesaid sums. And also we certify to you about divers other names residing in the aforesaid county, who have lands and tenements of the yearly value of 100s, beyond the charges and reprises, which have not yet appeared before us, the names of whom are similarly contained in the aforesaid indentures. And further we certify to you that there are not more persons, secular or religious, residing in the aforesaid county, who are held to pay to the contribution of the aforesaid subsidy, [just as] can be established to us in any way at present by the examination and inquisition.

m. 1d

John Cartyngton delivered this inquisition here on the 21st day of November in the 15th year of King Henry VI.

APPENDIX 3

Subsidy on Lands: Commissioners' Inquisition Return, 1436

Source: TNA, E 179/158/38 mm. 2-4

m. 2

Inquisition taken at the castle of the lord king of Newcastle upon Tyne on Thursday in the second week of Lent in the 14th year of the reign of King Henry VI after the conquest before Ralph Gray, knight, John Bertram, knight, Robert Rodes and John Cartyngton, and others by virtue of a certain grant of the lord king thereupon directed to them and others, to take the examinations and cognizances of divers persons, who are obliged to pay the subsidy, contained in the said grant, by the oath of John Belasys, John Herle, Roger Fenwyk, John Heron, Nicholas Heron, Edmund Craucestre, Edward Wetwang, Nicholas Turpyn, William Laweson, John Trewyk, Richard Cutour, William Benet and Edward Galon, sworn. Who say upon their oath that those persons, the names of whom are more fully clear in a certain indenture attached to this inquisition, have lands and tenements of the yearly value of 100s beyond the charges and reprises, and the same persons on the day of the taking of the aforesaid inquisition did not afterwards appear. In testimony of which matter, the aforesaid jurors have affixed their seals to this inquisition. Dated the day, place and year, above-said.

m. 3

Northumberland: The names of those appearing.

Robert Umfravile, knight, has lands and tenements and rents in the counties of Northumberland, York, Lincoln and in the bishopric of Durham of the yearly value beyond charges and reprises of £400.

Ralph Gray, knight, has lands and tenements and rents in the county of Northumberland, the town of Newcastle upon Tyne and in the bishopric of Durham of the yearly value beyond charges and reprises of £80.

Robert Ogle, knight, has lands and tenements and rents in the counties of Northumberland, Cumberland, Lancaster, the town of Newcastle upon Tyne and in the bishopric of Durham of the yearly rent beyond charges and reprises of £80.

John Woddryngton, knight, has lands and tenements and rents in the counties of Northumberland, Cumberland, the town of Newcastle upon Tyne, and within the liberties of Tyndale, Redesdale and Hexhamshire of the yearly rent beyond charges and reprises of £80.

John Bertram, knight, has lands and tenements and rents in the counties of Northumberland, Nottingham and the vill of Newcastle upon Tyne of the yearly rent beyond charges and reprises of £60.

William Swynburn, knight, has lands and tenements and rents in the county of Northumberland and within the liberty of Tyndale of the yearly value beyond reprises of £27.

John Middleton, knight, has lands and tenements and rents in the counties of Northumberland and Nottingham of the yearly value beyond reprises of £23.

Roger Woddryngton, esquire, has lands and tenements and rents in the county of Northumberland of the yearly value beyond reprises of £60.

William Carnaby has lands and tenements and rents in the county of Northumberland and within the liberties of Hexham of the yearly value beyond reprises of £30.

Thomas Lilburn has lands and tenements and rents in the county of Northumberland of the yearly rent beyond reprises of £20.

Robert Herbotell has lands and tenements and rents in the county of Northumberland, the town of Newcastle upon Tyne and in the bishopric of Durham of the yearly value beyond reprises of £24.

William Strother has lands and tenements and rents in the county of Northumberland and in the bishopric of Durham of the yearly value beyond reprises of £20.

William de la Vale has lands and tenements and rents in the county of Northumberland of the yearly value beyond reprises of £20.

John Cartington has lands and tenements and rents in the county of Northumberland, the town of Newcastle upon Tyne and in the bishopric of Durham of the yearly value beyond reprises of £20.

m. 3d

(still the names of those appearing)

William Eure, knight, has lands and tenements and rents in the counties of Northumberland, York and in the bishopric of Durham of the yearly value beyond reprises of £160.

William, abbot of Newminster, has lands and tenements and rents in the county of Northumberland, town of Newcastle upon Tyne, and in the bishopric of Durham of the yearly value beyond reprises of £10.

John, prior of Hexham, has lands and tenements and rents in the counties of Northumberland, York and the town of Newcastle upon Tyne of the yearly value beyond reprises of £10.

John, prior of Tynemouth, has lands and tenements and rents in the county of Northumberland and town of Newcastle upon Tyne of the yearly value beyond reprises of £20.

Thomas Ilderton has lands and tenements and rents in the county of Northumberland of the yearly value beyond reprises of £13.

John Swynhowe of Rok has lands and tenements and rents in the county of Northumberland of the yearly value beyond reprises of £20.

Robert Musgrave has lands and tenements and rents in the county of Northumberland of the yearly value beyond reprises of £20.

Thomas Middleton has lands and tenements and rents in the county of Northumberland of the yearly value beyond reprises of £10.

Thomas Gray of Horton has lands and tenements and rents in the county of Northumberland of the yearly value beyond reprises of £10.

John Belasys has lands and tenements and rents in the county of Northumberland of the yearly value beyond reprises of £10.

John Park has lands and tenements and rents in the county of Northumberland of the yearly value beyond reprises of £6.

Thomas Blenkinsop has lands and tenements and rents in the county of Northumberland, the town of Newcastle upon Tyne and within the liberty of Hexham of the yearly value beyond reprises of £6.

m. 4

(Still the names of those appearing)

John Maners, knight, has lands and tenements and rents in the county of Northumberland of the yearly value beyond reprises of £20.

John Horsley, (*apprentic' legis*), has lands and tenements and rents in the county of Northumberland, the town of Newcastle upon Tyne and within the liberty of Hexhamshire of the yearly value beyond reprises of £14.

Robert Raymes has lands and tenements and rents in the county of Northumberland of the yearly value beyond reprises of £13.

Richard Lilburn has lands and tenements and rents in the county of Northumberland of the yearly value beyond reprises of £10.

Gerard Mitford has lands and tenements and rents in the county of Northumberland of the yearly value beyond reprises of £13.

John Herle has lands and tenements and rents in the county of Northumberland of the yearly value beyond reprises of £5.

Edward Wetwang has lands and tenements and rents in the county of Northumberland of the yearly value beyond reprises of £5.

Nicholas Turpyn has lands and tenements and rents in the county of Northumberland of the yearly value beyond reprises of £10.

Robert Elleryngton has lands and tenements and rents in the county of Northumberland of the yearly value beyond reprises of £6.

John Trewyk has lands and tenements and rents in the county of Northumberland of the yearly value beyond reprises of £5.

William Benet has lands and tenements and rents in the county of Northumberland of the yearly value beyond reprises of £8.

William Laweson has lands and tenements and rents in the county of Northumberland of the yearly value beyond reprises of £6.

m. 4d

Northumberland: the names of those who did not appear.

William Elmden, knight

John Fenwyk

Thomas Haggerston

William Muschaunce

APPENDIX 4

Subsidy on Lands: Sheriff's Account, 1436 or Later

Source: TNA: PRO, E 179/158/38 m. 5

Particulars of the account of Roger Wodryngton, late sheriff of the county of Northumberland, collector of a certain subsidy from every person seised of manors, lands, tenements, rents, annuities, offices or any other temporal possessions as of a free tenement in England to their own use or of any other person or persons to his use of the yearly value of 100s beyond reprises and charges to be paid, 2s 6d, and so for every 20s, 6d, going up from the aforesaid 100s to the yearly value of £100 beyond charges and reprises, and from every person seised of the manors, lands, tenements, rents, annuities, offices or of any other temporal possessions to their own use or of any other person or persons to their own use as of a free tenement of the yearly value of 20s beyond the aforesaid £100 in the aforesaid kingdom for the aforesaid 20s payable, 8d, and so for every 20s, 8d, going up from the aforesaid £100 to the yearly value of £400 beyond charges and reprises; and also from every person seised of manors, lands, tenements, rents, annuities, offices or any other temporal possessions as of a free tenement to their own use, or from any other person or persons to his use seised of the yearly value of £400 and beyond in the aforesaid kingdom beyond charges and reprises payable for every 20s of his free tenement of the aforesaid £400, 2s, and so for every 20s of his free tenement beyond the aforesaid £400, 2s, going up from the same £400 to the highest value of the manors, lands, tenements, rents, annuities, offices or his other temporal possessions, of which the aforesaid person or persons are seised as of a free tenement. Provided always that no spiritual person is burdened by the aforesaid grant of any manors, lands, tenements, rents, annuities, offices or any other temporal possessions, unless only of the manors, lands, tenements, rents, annuities, offices and

possessions, purchased or granted in mortmain after the twentieth year of King Edward I to King Henry VI in his Parliament, held at Westminster in the 14th year of his reign, granted from the laity in the county of Northumberland, payable at the quindene of Easter next to come. By writ of the aforesaid king of his great seal, bearing date on the 29th day of January in the said 14th year, directed to the aforesaid sheriff and other commissioners and returned here to the Exchequer and being in the custody of the king's remembrancer.

Receipt of money:

The same renders an account of £22 7s from the subsidy of divers persons, underwritten, seised of the manors, lands, tenements and rents, ~~annuities and other temporal possessions~~ as of a free tenement in England to their own use ~~and of other persons to their use~~ of the yearly value of 100s beyond reprises and charges up to the yearly value of £100, which same manors, lands, tenements and rents, ~~annuities, offices and other temporal possessions, aforesaid~~, are worth per annum among themselves £894, viz Ralph Grey, knight, seised of the yearly value of £80; Robert Ogle, knight, seised of the yearly value of £80; John Woddryngton, knight, seised of the yearly value of £80; John Bartram, knight, seised of the yearly value of £60; William Swynbourn, knight, seised of the yearly value of £27; John Middleton, knight, seised of the yearly value of £23; Roger Woddryngton, esquire, seised of the yearly value of £60; William Carnaby seised of the yearly value of £30; Thomas Lilburn seised of the yearly value of £20; Robert Herbotell seised of the yearly value of £24; William Strother seised of the yearly value of £20; William de la Vale seised of the yearly value of £20; John Cartyngton seised of the yearly value of £20; William Eure, knight, seised of the yearly value of £100; William, abbot of Newminster, seised of the yearly value of £10; John,

prior of Hexham, seised of the yearly value of £10; John, prior of Tynemouth, seised of the yearly value of £20; Thomas Ilderton seised of the yearly value of £13; John Swynhowe of Rok seised of the yearly value of £20; Robert Musgrave seised of the yearly value of £20; Thomas Middelton seised of the yearly value of £10; Thomas Gray of Horton seised of the yearly value of £10; John Belasis seised of the yearly value of £10; John Park seised of the yearly value of £6; Thomas Blenkinsop seised of the yearly value of £6; John Maners, knight, seised of the yearly value of £20; John Horsley, (*apprentic' legis*), seised of

m. 5d

the yearly value of £14; Robert Raymes seised of the yearly value of £13; Richard Lilburn seised of the yearly value of £10; Gerard Mitford seised of the yearly value of £13; John Herle seised of the yearly value of 100s; Edward Wetwang seised of the yearly value of 100s; Nicholas Turpyn seised of the yearly value of £10; Robert Elleryngton seised of the yearly value of £6; John Trewik seised of the yearly value of 100s; William Benet seised of the yearly value of £8; and William Laweson seised of the yearly value of £6; and contained in a certain inquisition thereupon taken before Ralph Gray, knight, John Bartram, knight, and other commissioners of the lord king by virtue of a writ of the aforesaid king above, above in the title of these particulars noted, and sent here to the Exchequer of the king, and being in the custody of the king's remembrancer, namely from every pound 6d by the same writ.

And of 40s from the subsidy of the aforesaid William Eure, knight, seised of the manor(s), lands, tenements and rents, ~~annuities, offices and other temporal possessions~~ as of a free tenement in England to his own use of the yearly value of £60 beyond the aforesaid £100 ~~in the aforesaid kingdom to the value of £400~~ beyond charges and

reprises so contained in the aforesaid inquisition, from every pound 8d by the aforesaid writ.

And of £40 from the subsidy of Robert Umframville, knight, seised of the yearly value of £400 so contained in the aforesaid inquisition, viz from every pound 2s, by writ of the aforesaid king.

Sum of the receipt: £64. 7s.

APPENDIX 5

Subsidy on Lands: Exchequer, Enrolled Account, 1440/1

Source: TNA: PRO, E 359/29 rot. 6d

This document has suffered minor damage to the right hand side.

Hilary term 19 Hen. VI:

Northumberland:

R. Frampton, baron }
W. Haddon, clerk } auditors

Account of Roger Wodryngton, late sheriff of the county of Northumberland, collector of a certain subsidy from every person seised of manors, lands, tenements, rents, annuities, offices or any other temporal possessions as of a free tenement in England to his own proper use or of any other person or persons to his use of the yearly value of 100s. beyond reprises and charges to be paid, 2s. 6d., and so for every 20s., 6d., ascending from the aforesaid 100s. up to the yearly value of £100 beyond charges and reprises, and from each person seised of manors, lands and tenements, rents, annuities, offices or of any other temporal possessions to his own use or of any other person or persons to his own proper use as of a free tenement of the yearly value of 20s. beyond the aforesaid £100 in the aforesaid kingdom for the aforesaid 20s. to be paid, and so for every 20s., 8d., ascending from the aforesaid £100 up to the yearly value of £400 beyond charges and reprises, and also from every person seised of manors, lands, tenements, rents, annuities, offices or any other temporal possessions as of a free tenement to his own proper use or of any other person or persons seised to his use of the yearly value of £400 and beyond in the aforesaid kingdom beyond charges and reprises to be paid for every 20s of his free tenement of the aforesaid £400 2s. ... every 20s. of his free tenement beyond the aforesaid £400 2s., ascending from the same £400

up to the utmost [value] of the manors, lands and tenements, rents, annuities, offices or his other temporal possessions, of which a person or persons are seised as of a free tenement. Provided always that no spiritual person may be burdened by the aforesaid grant of any manors, lands, tenements, rents, annuities, offices or any other temporal possessions, unless only of manors, lands, tenements, rents, annuities, offices ... purchased or acquired in mortmain after the 20th year of King Edward I, granted to King Henry VI in his Parliament held at Westminster in the 14th year of [his reign] by the laity in the county of Northumberland, to be paid at the quindene of Easter next to come by writ of the aforesaid king of great ..., bearing date on the 29th day of January in the said 14th year, directed to the aforesaid sheriff and other commissioners and returned here at the Exchequer and in the custody of the remembrancer

The same man renders an account of £22 7s from the subsidy of divers persons, underwritten, seised of manors, lands, tenements and rents as of England to his own proper use of the yearly value of 100s beyond reprises and charges up to the value of £100, which same lands, tenements and rents are worth per annum among themselves £894, viz of Ralph Grey, knight, seised of the yearly value of £80; Robert Ogle seised of the yearly value of £80; John Woddryngton [seised of the yearly] value of £80; John Bar... seised of the yearly value of £60; William Swynbourn, knight, seised of the yearly value of £27; John Middleton, knight, [seised] of the yearly value of £23; Roger Woddryngton, esquire, seised of the yearly value of £60; William Carnaby seised of the yearly value of £30; Thomas Lilburn seised of the yearly value of £20; Robert Herbotell seised of the yearly value of £24; William ... seised of the yearly value of £20; William de la Vale seised of the yearly value of £20; John Cartyngton seised of the yearly value of £20; William Eure, knight, seised of the yearly value of £100;

William, abbot of Newminster, seised of the yearly value of £10; the prior of Hexham seised of the yearly value of £10; John, prior of Tynemouth, seised of the yearly value of £20; Thomas ... seised of the yearly value of £13; John Swynehowe of Roke seised of the yearly value of £20; Robert Musgrave seised of the yearly value of £20; Thomas Middleton seised of the yearly value of £10; Thomas Gray of Horton seised of the yearly value of £10; Thomas ... John Belasis seised of the yearly value of £10; John Park seised of the yearly value of £6; Thomas Blenkinsop seised of the yearly value of £6; John Maners, knight, seised of the yearly value of £20; John Horsley, apprentice at law (*apprentic' legis*) seised of the yearly value of £14; Robert Raynes seised of the yearly value of £13; Richard Lilburn seised of the yearly value of £10; Gerard Mitford seised of the yearly value of £13; John Herle seised of the yearly value of 100s; Edward Wetwang seised of the yearly value of 100s; Nicholas Turpyn seised of the yearly value of £10; Robert Elleryngton seised of the yearly value of £6; John Trewyk seised of the yearly value of £6¹ 100s; William Benet seised of the yearly value of £8; and William Lawesson seised of the yearly value of [£]6; just as is contained in a certain inquisition taken thereupon before Ralph Gray, knight, John Bartram, knight, and other commissioners of the lord king, by virtue of a writ of the aforesaid king noted above in the title of this account, and sent here to the king's Exchequer and being in the custody of the king's remembrancer, viz from every pound 6d., by the same writ, just as is contained in a certain schedule of particulars thereupon delivered in the treasury. And of 40s. of the aforesaid William Eure, knight, seised of the manors, lands, tenements and rents as of a free tenement in England to his own proper use of the yearly value of

¹ This figure has been put into a box.

£60 beyond the aforesaid £100 beyond the charges and reprises so contained in the aforesaid inquisition, *viz* from every pound 8d. by the aforesaid writ, just as is contained there. And from £40 from the subsidy of Robert Umframville, knight, seised of the yearly value of £400 so contained in the aforesaid inquisition, *viz* from every pound 2s., by the aforesaid writ of the king, just as is contained there.

Sum of receipts: £64. 7s. And he pays in the 17th roll of King Henry VI in North[umberland].

APPENDIX 6

Subsidy on Lands: Persons Appearing at the Exchequer¹

Source: TNA: PRO, E 179/240/269, rot. 3d

Northumberland:

William Elmeden, knight, resident at Bamburgh in the county of Northumberland.

William Evere, knight, resident at Witton within the bishopric and liberty of Durham.

Robert Ogle, knight, resident at Ogle in the county of Northumberland.

John Bertram, knight, resident at Bothall in the county of Northumberland.

Roger Thornton, esquire, [resident] at le Ile (The Isle) within the bishopric and bishopric [*sic*] of Durham.

Thomas Holden, esquire, resident at Bermes within the aforesaid bishopric and liberty.

Thomas Carlele, esquire, resident at Pencher within the said bishopric of Durham.

Robert Dolphanby, resident at Gatisheued within the said bishopric.

Robert Herbotell, esquire, of Preston in the county of Northumberland.

Maud, who was the wife of Edmund FitzWilliam, resident at [*blank*] in the county of York.

John Midilton, esquire, resident at Belsowe in the county of Northumberland.

Thomas Ilderton, esquire, resident at Ilderton in the county of Northumberland.

Robert Marsshall, resident at Hull in the county of York.

John Belasys, resident at Mitford in the county of Northumberland.

Joan, who was the wife of Alneth... Hanlaby, knight, later of John Dent, resident at Hanlaby in the county of York.

¹ It is not clear why some residents of Northumberland named on this list are also identified as appearing before the Northumberland commission.

APPENDIX 7

Subsidy on Lands: Cumberland: Sheriff's Account, 1436 or Later
Source: TNA: PRO, E 179/90/26

Cumberland: Particulars of account of John Broghton, late sheriff of the county of Cumberland, whom the now lord king Henry VI by his letters patent, bearing date 29th day of January in the 14th year of his reign, directed to the same sheriff and other persons, shown upon these particulars and remaining in the custody of the king's remembrancer, assigned to levy and collect a certain subsidy in the aforesaid county, which the commonalties of the realm of the king of England with the assent of the lords spiritual and temporal, being in the last Parliament of the king, by the authority of the same Parliament amongst other things granted to the king, for the defence of the kingdom of the aforesaid king in the manner and form following, viz: that each person seised of manors, lands, tenements, rents, annuities, offices or any other temporal possessions as of a free tenement in England to his own proper use or any other person or persons to his use of the yearly value of 100s beyond charges and reprises, should pay to the king for the aforesaid defence 2s 6d, and so for every 20s 6d ascending from the aforesaid 100s to the yearly value of £100 beyond charges and reprises, and that every person seised of manors, lands, tenements, rents, annuities, offices or any other temporal possessions to his own proper use or any other person or persons to his use as of a free tenement of the yearly value of 20s beyond the aforesaid £100 in the aforesaid kingdom, should pay to the king for the aforesaid 20s 8d, and so for every 20s 8d ascending from the aforesaid £100 to the yearly value of £400 beyond charges and reprises, and that every person seised of manors, lands, tenements, rents, annuities, offices or any other temporal possessions as of a free tenement to his own proper use or any other person or persons to his use seised of the yearly value of £400 and beyond in

the aforesaid kingdom beyond charges and reprises, should pay to the king for every 20s from his aforesaid free tenement of £400 2s, and so for each 20s of the free tenement beyond the aforesaid £400 2s ascending from the same £400 to the highest value of the manors, lands, tenements, rents, annuities, offices or any other their temporal possessions, of which they are seised as of a free tenement, below the status of baron and baroness. Provided also that no spiritual person should be burdened by the aforesaid grant of any manors, lands, tenements, rents, annuities, offices or any temporal possessions unless only of manors, lands, tenements, rents, annuities, offices and possessions purchased or alienated in mortmain after the 20th year of King Edward I, made by due examination thereupon before the aforesaid sheriff and other persons specially limited in this regard. To be paid to the same now lord king Henry VI at the quindene of Easter then next to come, just as is more fully contained in the said writs of now king thereupon completed, *viz* of this subsidy, as below.

Subsidies:

The prior of the church the Blessed Mary, Carlisle, has as of a free tenement lands and tenements within the said county of Cumberland, purchased after the 20th year of King Edward I, which are worth per annum beyond reprises and charges £6 13s 4d, just as is contained in a transcript of a certain inquisition taken thereupon before the aforesaid John Broghton, late sheriff of the aforesaid county, and other commissioners of the king, deputed for this specially, by virtue of a certain royal commission directed to them in this regard, shown upon these particulars and remaining in the custody of the king's remembrancer, namely from each pound for this subsidy 6d: 3s.

John Penyngton, knight, has lands and tenements within the said county of Cumberland, and counties of Lancaster, Westmorland and York, which are worth per annum beyond reprises and charges, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, £85. Subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 42s 6d.

Nicholas Radclyffe, knight, has lands and tenements within the said counties of Cumberland and Westmorland, which are worth per annum beyond reprises and charges, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, £66. Subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 33s.

John Skelton, knight, has lands and tenements within the said county of Cumberland and also divers annuities in the counties of Dorset and Somerset, which are worth per annum beyond charges and reprises, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, £118 6s 8d; subsidy thereupon: 6d of a pound for £100: 50s; 8d of a pound for £18 the residue: 12s.

Richard Hudilston, knight, acknowledges that he expends per annum as of a free tenement beyond reprises within the said county of Cumberland, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, £100; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 50s.

Lady Margaret of Louthre acknowledged that she expends as of a free tenement beyond reprises within the said counties of Cumberland and Westmorland per annum, just as is contained in the aforesaid transcript, £40. Subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 20s.

Henry Fenwyk acknowledges that he expends per annum as of a free tenement in the said counties of Cumberland and Northumberland beyond reprises, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, £60; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 30s.

Henry Hoton acknowledges that he expends per annum beyond reprises as of a free tenement in the said county of Cumberland, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, £12; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 6s.

Thomas Carlton acknowledges that he expends per annum in the aforesaid county as of a free tenement beyond reprises, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, £10; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 5s.

John Bost acknowledges that he expends in the said county of Cumberland beyond reprises per annum as of a free tenement, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, £10; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 5s.

Robert Alanby acknowledges that he expends in the said county of Cumberland beyond reprises as of a free tenement per annum, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, £6 13s 4d; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 3s.

Roland Waux acknowledges that he expends in the said counties of Cumberland and Westmorland per annum beyond reprises and charges, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, £6 13s 4d; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 3s.

John Denton acknowledges that he expends per annum beyond reprises in the said county of Cumberland, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, £6 13s 4d; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 3s.

Thomas Beauchamp acknowledges that he expends per annum in the said county of Cumberland beyond charges and reprises, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, £6 13s 4d; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 3s.

William Thwaytes acknowledges that he expends per annum in the said county of Cumberland beyond charges and reprises, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, £32; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 16s.

John Skelton acknowledges that he expends per annum in the said county of Cumberland beyond charges and reprises, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, £20; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 10s.

John Swynburn acknowledges that he expends per annum in the said county of Cumberland beyond charges and reprises, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, £14 13s 4d; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 7s.

Nicholas Irton acknowledges that he expends per annum in the said county of Cumberland beyond charges and reprises, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, £30; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 15s.

John Blenerhayset acknowledges that he expends per annum in the said county of Cumberland beyond reprises, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, 100s; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 2s 6d.

Richard Warcopp acknowledges that he expends per annum in the said county of Cumberland beyond charges and reprises, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, 100s; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 2s 6d.

Thomas Appilby acknowledges that he expends per annum in the said counties of Cumberland and Westmorland beyond charges and reprises, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, £6 13s 4d; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 3s.

Richard Louthre acknowledges that he expends per annum in the said county of Cumberland beyond charges and reprises, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, £10; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 5s.

Robert Hoton acknowledges that he expends per annum in the said county of Cumberland beyond charges and reprises, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, £8; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 4s.

John Southayk acknowledges that he expends per annum in the said county of Cumberland beyond charges and reprises, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, 100s; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 2s 6d.

John Hoton of Penreth acknowledges that he expends per annum in the said county of Cumberland beyond charges and reprises, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, 100s; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 2s 6d.

Thomas Salkeld acknowledges that he expends per annum in the said county of Cumberland beyond charges and reprises, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, £6 13s 4d; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 3s.

George Warwyk acknowledges that he expends per annum in the said counties of Cumberland and Westmorland beyond charges and reprises, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, £20; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 10s.

John Eglisfeld the elder acknowledges that he expends per annum in the said county of Cumberland beyond charges and reprises, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, £38; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 19s.

William Martyndale acknowledges that he expends per annum in the said county of Cumberland beyond charges and reprises, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, £40; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 20s.

Thomas Sandes acknowledges that he expends per annum in the said county of Cumberland beyond charges and reprises, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, £20; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 10s.

John Englisfeld the younger acknowledges that he expends per annum in the said county of Cumberland beyond charges and reprises, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, £8; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 4s.

[Dorse]

Alexander Heighmore acknowledges that he expends per annum in the said county of Cumberland beyond charges and reprises, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, £10; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 5s.

William Louthre of Rosa acknowledges that he expends per annum in the said counties of Cumberland and Westmorland beyond charges and reprises, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, £7; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 3s 6d.

Richard Kirkebride acknowledges that he expends in the said county of Cumberland beyond charges and reprises per annum, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, 100s; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 2s 6d.

John Lamplogh, knight, acknowledges that he expends in the said counties of Cumberland and Lancaster beyond charges and reprises per annum, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, £40; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 20s.

William Threlkeld acknowledges that he expends in the said county of Cumberland beyond charges and reprises per annum, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, £6 13s 4d; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 3s.

Thomas Aglionnby acknowledges that he expends in the said county of Cumberland beyond charges and reprises per annum, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, 100s; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 2s 6d.

John Mulcastre acknowledges that he expends in the said county of Cumberland beyond charges and reprises per annum, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, 100s; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 2s 6d.

Adam Denton acknowledges that he expends in the said county of Cumberland beyond charges and reprises per annum, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, £6 13s 4d; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 3s.

Nicholas Stanlawe acknowledges that he expends in the said county of Cumberland beyond charges and reprises per annum, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, £8; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 4s.

William Denton acknowledges that he expends in the said county of Cumberland beyond charges and reprises per annum, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, £20; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 10s.

William Dikes acknowledges that he expends in the said county of Cumberland beyond charges and reprises per annum, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, £20; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 10s.

William Sandes acknowledges that he expends in the said county of Cumberland beyond charges and reprises per annum, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, 100s; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 2s 6d.

John Legh acknowledges that he expends in the said county of Cumberland beyond charges and reprises per annum, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, 100s; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 2s 6d.

John Louthre acknowledges that he expends in the said county of Cumberland beyond charges and reprises per annum, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, £6 13s 4d; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 3s.

John Ribton acknowledges that he expends in the said county of Cumberland beyond charges and reprises per annum, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, £10; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 5s.

William Coldale acknowledges that he expends in the said county of Cumberland beyond charges and reprises per annum, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, 100s; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 2s 6d.

William Aglionnby acknowledges that he expends in the said county of Cumberland beyond charges and reprises per annum, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, £6; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 3s.

Robert Birtby acknowledges that he expends in the said county of Cumberland beyond charges and reprises per annum, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, 100s; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 2s 6d.

Thomas Senenhouse acknowledges that he expends in the said county of Cumberland beyond charges and reprises per annum, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, 100s; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 2s 6d.

Christopher Curwen, knight, acknowledges that he expends in the said counties of Cumberland and Westmorland beyond charges and reprises per annum, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, £90; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 45s.

Hugh Louthre acknowledges that he expends in the said county of Cumberland beyond charges and reprises per annum, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, £26 13s 4d; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 13s.

Thomas Dalamore acknowledges that he expends in the said counties of Cumberland and Westmorland beyond charges and reprises per annum, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, £20; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 10s.

Robert Karlell acknowledges that he expends in the said county of Cumberland beyond charges and reprises per annum, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, 100s; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 2s 6d.

William Legh, knight, acknowledges that he expends in the said county of Cumberland beyond charges and reprises per annum, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, £26 13s 4d; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 13s.

William Stapilton acknowledges that he expends in the said county of Cumberland beyond charges and reprises per annum, so contained in the aforesaid transcript, £20; subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 10s.

Sum received: £29 7s 6d.

APPENDIX 8

Subsidy on Lands: Westmorland: Sheriff's Account, 1436 or Later
Source: TNA: PRO, E 179/195/32

Westmorland: Particulars of account of Thomas Parre, knight, sheriff of the county of Westmorland, whom the now lord king Henry VI by his writ, bearing date 29th day of January in the 14th year of his reign, directed to the same sheriff and other persons, shown upon these particulars and remaining in the hands of these particulars, assigned to levy and collect a certain subsidy in the aforesaid county, which the commonalties of the realm of the king of England with the assent of the lords spiritual and temporal, being in the last Parliament of the king, by the authority of the same Parliament amongst other things granted to the king, for the defence of the kingdom of the aforesaid king in the manner and form following, *viz*: that each person seised of manors, lands, tenements, rents, annuities, offices or any other temporal possessions as of a free tenement in England to his own proper use or any other person or persons to his use of the yearly value of 100s beyond charges and reprises, should pay to the king for the aforesaid defence 2s 6d, and so for every 20s 6d ascending from the aforesaid 100s to the yearly value of £100 beyond charges and reprises, and that every person seised of manors, lands, tenements, rents, annuities, offices or any other temporal possessions to his own proper use or any other person or persons to his use as of a free tenement of the yearly value of 20s beyond the aforesaid £100 in the aforesaid kingdom, should pay to the king for the aforesaid 20s 8d, and so for every 20s 8d ascending from the aforesaid £100 to the yearly value of £400 beyond charges and reprises, and that every person seised of manors, lands, tenements, rents, annuities, offices or any other temporal possessions as of a free tenement to his own proper use or any other person or persons to his use seised of the yearly value of £400 and beyond in

the aforesaid kingdom beyond charges and reprises, should pay to the king for every 20s from his aforesaid free tenement of £400 2s, and so for each 20s of the free tenement beyond the aforesaid £400 2s ascending from the same £400 to the highest value of the manors, lands, tenements, rents, annuities, offices or any other their temporal possessions, of which they are seised as of a free tenement, below the status of baron and baroness. Provided also that no spiritual person should be burdened by the aforesaid grant of any manors, lands, tenements, rents, annuities, offices or any temporal possessions unless only of manors, lands, tenements, rents, annuities, offices and possessions purchased or alienated in mortmain after the 20th year of King Edward I, made by due examination thereupon before the aforesaid sheriff and other persons specially limited in this regard. To be paid to the same now lord king at the quindene of Easter then next to come, just as is more fully contained in the said writ of now king thereupon completed, of Robert Docket, attorney of the same sheriff, just as is contained in the memoranda of the 14th year of the said now king Henry VI between the attornments of Easter term in the same year on the part of the king's remembrancer, viz of this subsidy, as below.

Richard Musgrave, knight, has lands and tenements in the aforesaid county of the yearly value beyond charges and reprises of £80: subsidy thereupon 6d of a pound: 40s.

Christopher Moresby, knight, has lands and tenements in the aforesaid county, etc, of £60; subsidy thereupon 30s.

Henry Wherton has lands and tenements in the aforesaid county of the value, etc, of £25; subsidy thereupon 12s 6d.

William Blenkinsopp has lands and tenements in the aforesaid county, etc, of £26; subsidy thereupon, as above, 13s.

William Crakanthorpp has lands and tenements in the aforesaid county, etc, of £15; subsidy thereupon, as above, 7s 6d.

Thomas Warcopp has lands and tenements in the aforesaid county of the value, etc, of £13; subsidy thereupon, as above, 6s 6d.

Robert Warcopp has lands and tenements in the aforesaid county of the value, etc, of £26; subsidy thereupon, as above, 13s.

Thomas Warcopp of Sandford has lands and tenements in the aforesaid county, etc, of £10; subsidy thereupon, as above, 5s.

John de Barton has lands and tenements in the aforesaid county of the value, etc, of £6; subsidy thereupon, as above, 3s.

John Scayff has lands and tenements in the aforesaid county of the value, etc, of £6; subsidy thereupon, as above, 3s.

Richard Blenkansopp has lands and tenements there of the value, etc, of £10; subsidy thereupon, as above, 5s.

Thomas Musgrave has lands and tenements there of the value, etc, of £10; subsidy thereupon, as above, 5s.

Thomas Blenkinsopp the younger has lands and tenements there of the value, etc, of £6; subsidy thereupon, as above, 3s.

John Langdale has lands and tenements in the aforesaid county of the value, etc, of 100s; subsidy thereupon, as above, 2s 6d.

Thomas Strikeland, knight, has lands and tenements there, etc, of £86; subsidy thereupon, as above, 43s.

Walter Strikeland has lands and tenements there of the value, etc, of £13; subsidy thereupon, as above, 6s 6d.

Robert Layburn, knight, has lands and tenements there, etc, of £53; subsidy thereupon, as above, 26s 6d.

Robert Belyngham has lands and tenements there of the value, etc, of £10; subsidy thereupon, as above, 5s.

Thomas Midelton has lands and tenements there of the value, etc, of £20; subsidy thereupon, as above, 10s.

William Thornburgh has lands and tenements there of the value, etc, of £20; subsidy thereupon, as above, 10s.

Nicholas Layburn has lands and tenements there of the value, etc, of £13; subsidy thereupon, as above, 6s 6d.

William Levyns/Lenyns has lands and tenements there of the value, etc, of 100s; subsidy thereupon, as above, 2s 6d.

John Roos has lands and tenements in the aforesaid county of the value, etc, of £10; subsidy thereupon, as above, 5s.

Hugh Ward has lands and tenements there of the yearly value, etc, of £10; subsidy thereupon, as above, 5s.

John del Chamber has lands and tenements there of the value, etc, of 100s; subsidy thereupon, as above, 2s 6d.

Roger Gnype/Guype has lands and tenements there of the value, etc, of £10; subsidy thereupon, as above, 5s.

Richard Preston has lands and tenements there of the value, etc, of £21; subsidy thereupon, as above, 10s 6d.

Richard Doket the elder has lands and tenements there of the value, etc, of £20; subsidy thereupon, as above, 10s.

Richard Doket junior has lands and tenements there of the value, etc, of £6; subsidy thereupon, as above, 3s.

Robert Dokwra has lands and tenements there of the value, etc, of £6; subsidy thereupon, as above, 3s.

Richard Roos has lands and tenements there of the value, etc, of £20; subsidy thereupon, as above, 10s.

John Roos, son of the aforesaid Richard, has lands and tenements there, etc, of £6; subsidy thereupon, as above, 3s.

Thomas Kayrose has lands and tenements there of the value, etc, of 100s; subsidy thereupon, as above, 2s 6d.

Robert Garnet has lands and tenements there of the value, etc, of 100s; subsidy thereupon, as above, 2s 6d.

John de Weshyngton has lands and tenements there, etc, of £6; subsidy thereupon, as above, 3s.

Joan, who was the wife of Thomas Roos, has lands and tenements, etc, of 100s; subsidy thereupon, as above, 2s 6d.

Robert Litster, clerk, has lands and tenements there of the value, etc, of 100s; subsidy thereupon, as above, 2s 6d.

William Buggyngs, clerk, has lands and tenements there of the value, etc, of 100s; subsidy thereupon, as above, 2s 6d.

Richard de Manser has lands and tenements there of the value, etc, of 100s; subsidy thereupon, as above, 2s 6d.

John Bethomen/Bechomen has lands and tenements there of the value, etc, of 100s; subsidy thereupon, as above, 2s 6d.

Robert Roche has lands and tenements in the aforesaid county of the value, etc, of 100s; subsidy thereupon, as above, 2s 6d.

Hugh Salkeld the elder has lands and tenements there of the value, etc, of £46; subsidy thereupon, as above, 23s.

Hugh Salkeld the younger has lands and tenements there of the value, etc, of 100s; subsidy thereupon, as above, 2s 6d.

William Lancastre of Hertsopp has lands and tenements there, etc, of £20; subsidy thereupon, as above, 10s.

Henry Threlkeld, knight, has lands and tenements in England, etc, of £80; subsidy thereupon, as above, 40s.

Isabel, who was the wife of William Hoton, has lands and tenements in the aforesaid county of £20; subsidy thereupon 10s.

Robert Lancastre has lands and tenements there of the value, etc, of 100s; subsidy thereupon, as above, 2s 6d.

Robert Sandford has lands and tenements there of the value, etc, of £40; subsidy thereupon, as above, 20s.

John Clibbourn has lands and tenements in the aforesaid county, etc, of £17; subsidy thereupon, as above, 8s 6d.

Isabel, who was the wife of John Helton, has lands and tenements there, etc, of 100s; subsidy thereupon 2s 6d.

Nicholas Falowefeld has lands and tenements there of the value, etc, of £10; subsidy thereupon, as above, 5s.

Gilbert Wherton has lands and tenements there of the value, etc, of £10; subsidy thereupon, as above, 5s.

Hugh Loucher of Ascome has lands and tenements there, etc, of £6; subsidy thereupon, as above, 3s.

Just as it is contained in a certain roll of the same sheriff and other commissioners there, remaining in the hands of these particulars, where the names of each said single person with the yearly values of the aforesaid lands and tenements are singularly noted and declared. From any subsidy of any persons seised in any lands, tenements, rents, annuities, offices or any other temporal possessions of a free tenement to his own proper use or that of anyone else, attaining the sum of £100 or the sum of £400 and beyond, below the status of baron and baroness in the aforesaid county, whereof any subsidy to the king's use according to the form and effect of the grant of this subsidy ought to be levied or paid, not paid on account that there is not any person resident in the aforesaid county seised in these lands, tenements, rents, annuities, offices or any other temporal possessions to his own proper use or of any other person, whose yearly value reaches the sum of £100 or the sum of £400 and beyond, as he says upon his oath.

Sum total received: £23 11s.

[Dorse:]

Sum of the values: £942. Subsidy £23 11s.

Progress of Selected IPMs for Northumberland During the Reign of Henry IV (1399-1413)

CIPM volume	Reference	Surname	Forename	Date of writ <i>diem clausit extremum</i> (dce)	Day	Date writ dce executed	Day	No. of days from date of writ dce to execution	Leap days	Date seisin ordered	No. of days from execution to writ of seisin	Leap days	Seisin reference	Total days from date of writ dce to date of writ ordering seisin
1399-1405	p. 190, [581].	Athelles (de)	Adomar	19-Apr-02	Wed	26-Apr-02	Wed	7	0	6-May-02	10	0	CCR, 1399-1402, pp. 524-29.	17
1399-1405	p. 64, [212].	Craucestre	Emma	30-May-00	Sun	23-Jun-00	Wed	24	0	24-Nov-00	154	0	CCR, 1399-1402, pp. 232-33.	178
1399-1405	p. 249, [756].	Felton (de)	John	12-Feb-03	Mon	26-Mar-03	Mon	42	0	12-May-03	47	0	CFR, 1399-1405, p. 213.	89
1399-1405	pp. 138-39, [433].	Gray	Thomas	18-Dec-00	Sat	1-Jun-01	Wed	165	0	5-Dec-02	552	0	CCR, 1402-05, pp. 11-20.	717
1399-1405	p. 311, [906].	Greystoke	Joan	20-Sep-03	Thu	9-Oct-03	Tue	19	0	8-Nov-03	30	0	CCR, 1402-05, pp. 196-203.	49
1399-1405	p. 130, [412].	Hesilryg	Joan	30-Jan-01	Sun	7-Apr-01	Thu	67	0	6-May-01	29	0	CFR, 1399-1405, p. 127.	96
1399-1405	p. 308, [896].	Heton (de)	William	12-Feb-04	Tue	26-Mar-04	Wed	43	1	30-May-08	1526	1	CCR, 1405-09, pp. 303-05.	1571
1399-1405	pp. 355-56, [1032].	Holgrave	David	7-Aug-05	Fri	29-Aug-05	Sat	22	0	13-Feb-06	168	0	CFR, 1405-13, p. 26.	190
1399-1405	pp. 325-26, [956].	Lomley (de)	Thomas	25-Jun-04	Wed	2-Oct-04	Thu	99	0	20-Mar-05	169	0	CCR, 1402-05, pp. 427-440.	268
1399-1405	pp. 245-46, [745].	Maners	Alice	2-Jan-03	Tue	29-Jan-03	Mon	27	0	9-May-03	100	0	CFR, 1399-1405, pp. 212-13.	127
1399-1405	pp. 12-13, [29].	Trewyke (de)	Thomas	6-Feb-00	Fri	15-Jun-02	Thu	860	1	1-Dec-02	169	0	CCR, 1402-05, 11-20.	1030
1399-1405	pp. 209-10, [642].	Langley (Duke of York)	Edmund	4-Aug-02	Fri	24-Aug-02	Thu	20	0	5-Nov-02	73	0	CFR, 1399-1405, p. 186.	93
1405-1413	p. 129, [379].	Carnaby (de)	William	28-Jan-08	Sat	30-Jun-08	Sat	154	1	5-Aug-08	36	0	CCR, 1405-09, pp. 341-42.	191
1405-1413	p. 41, [131].	LeScrope	Stephen	1-Feb-06	Mon	18-Feb-06	Thu	17	0	12-Mar-06	22	0	CFR, 1405-13, p. 29.	39
1405-1413	pp. 193-94, [534].	Mitford	John	4-Sep-09	Wed	25-Oct-09	Fri	51	0	5-Nov-09	11	0	CFR, 1405-13, p. 168.	62
1405-1413	p. 262, [734].	Ogle	Robert	8-Nov-09	Fri	17-Apr-10	Thu	160	0	3-May-10	16	0	CFR, 1405-13, p. 187.	176
1405-1413	p. 1, [1].	Ogle	Helen	16-Feb-06	Tue	1-Apr-06	Thu	44	0	26-Apr-07	390	0	CFR, 1405-13, pp. 73-74.	434
1405-1413	pp. 137-38, [395].	Whitchestre	William	20-Feb-08	Mon	16-May-08	Wed	86	1	23-May-08	7	0	CFR, 1405-13, p. 109.	94
Sub Total								1907	4		3509	1		5421
Add leap days								4			1			
Total days								1911			3510			5421
Average days								106			195			301

All references to CCR in this and the following tables have been taken from the digital library British History Online (co-managed by the Institute of Historical Research).

Progress of Selected IPMs for Northumberland During the Reign of Henry V (1413-22)

CIPM volume	Reference	Surname	Forename	Date of writ <i>diem clausit extremum</i> (dce)	Day	Date writ dce executed	Day	No. of days from date of writ dce to execution	Leap days	Date seisin ordered	No. of days from execution to writ of seisin	Leap days	Seisin reference	Total days from date of writ dce to date of writ ordering seisin
1413-18	p. 163, [519].	Crawcestre	Richard	20-Sep-16	Sun	1-Oct-16	Thu	11	0	8-Nov-16	38	0	CFR, 1413-22, p. 175.	49
1413-18	pp. 166-167, [529].	Hibburne	Robert	1-Jul-16	Wed	29-Oct-16	Thu	120	0	19-Nov-16	21	0	CFR, 1413-22, p. 179.	141
1413-18	pp. 171-72, [551].	Ogle	Joan	27-Oct-16	Tue	4-Nov-16	Wed	8	0	18-Nov-16	14	0	CFR, 1413-22, p. 174.	22
1413-18	p. 50, [153].	Orde	John	28-Apr-14	Sat	8-May-14	Tue	10	0	18-May-14	10	0	CCR, 1413-19, pp. 122-27.	20
1413-18	pp. 14-15, [53].	Trewyke	Agnes	21-Aug-13	Mon	1-Feb-14	Thu	164	0	9-May-14	97	0	CFR, 1413-22, pp. 65-66.	261
1413-18	p. 220, [702].	Wendout	Christina	30-Nov-17	Tue	18-Mar-18	Fri	108	0	5-May-18	48	0	CFR, 1413-22, p. 255.	156
1418-22	p. 121, [409].	Cramlington	William	1-Dec-20	Sun	19-Dec-20	Thu	18	0	26-Jan-21	38	0	CFR, 1413-22, p. 375.	56
1418-22	pp. 329-30, [924].	Felton	Elizabeth	1-May-22	Fri	23-May-22	Sat	22	0	10-Jul-22	48	0	CFR, 1413-22, p. 438.	70
1418-22	p.29, [111].	Greystoke	Ralph	14-Apr-18	Thu	28-Apr-18	Thu	14	0	9-May-18	11	0	CFR, 1413-22, pp. 245-46.	25
1418-22	pp. 286-87, [828].	Middleton	Christine	18-Mar-22	Wed	9-Apr-22	Thu	22	0	3-May-22	24	0	CCR, 1419-22, pp. 236-49.	46
1418-22	p. 124, [419].	Musgrave	John	8-Jan-21	Wed	13-Mar-21	Thu	64	0	8-Jun-21	87	0	CFR, 1413-22, p. 400.	151
1418-22	p. 290, [833].	Umfraville	Gilbert	18-Apr-21	Fri	26-Jun-21	Thu	69	0	24-Nov-21	151	0	CCR, 1419-22, pp. 183-85.	220
Sub Total								630	0		587	0		1217
Add leap days								0			0			0
Total days								630			587			1217
Average days								52			49			101

Progress of Selected IPMs for Northumberland During the Reign of Henry VI (1422-47)

CIPM volume	Reference	Surname	Forename	Date of writ <i>diem clausit extremum</i> (dce)	Day	Date writ dce executed	Day	No. of days from date of writ dce to execution	Leap days	Date seisin ordered	No. of days from execution to writ of seisin	Leap days	Seisin reference	Total days from date of writ dce to date of writ ordering seisin
1422-27	pp. 600-01, [671].	Claveryng	John	3-Apr-25	Tue	8-Sep-25	Sat	158	0	10-Nov-25	63	0	CFR, 1422-30, p. 113.	221
1422-27	pp. 388-89, [445].	FitzHugh	Henry	13-Jan-25	Sat	7-Apr-25	Sat	84	0	9-Aug-25	124	0	CCR, 1422-29, pp. 165-168.	208
1422-27	p. 656, [757].	Harbottle	Isabel	1-Nov-26	Fri	11-Nov-26	Mon	10	0	19-Dec-26	38	0	CFR, 1422-30, pp. 158-59.	48
1422-27	pp. 108-09, [62].	Hoggisson	Eleanor	1-May-23	Sat	14-Jun-23	Mon	44	0	8-Jul-23	24	0	CFR, 1422-30, p. 40.	68
1422-27	pp. 153-54, [131].	Mitford	William	20-Apr-23	Fri	10-Jun-23	Thu	51	0	10-Nov-23	153	0	CCR, 1422-29, pp. 80-82.	204
1427-32	p. 100, [194].	Ask	Eleanor	24-Oct-28	Sun	13-Nov-28	Sat	20	0	20-May-30	553	0	CFR, 1422-30, p. 324.	573
1427-32	pp. 363-65, [697].	Delaval	Joan	12-Jul-32	Sat	20-Aug-32	Wed	39	0	15-Oct-32	56	0	CFR, 1430-37, p. 128.	95
1427-32	p. 242, [472].	Neville	John	22-Apr-31	Sun	16-Jun-31	Sat	55	0	7-Jul-31	21	0	CFR, 1430-37, p. 45.	76
1427-32	p. 189, [365].	Swan	Isabel	20-May-30	Sat	6-Jul-30	Thu	47	0	11-Oct-30	97	0	CFR, 1430-37, p. 19.	144
1427-32	pp. 196-97, [378].	Thornton	Roger	22-Jan-30	Sun	2-Mar-30	Thu	39	0	26-May-30	85	0	CCR, 1429-35, pp. 18-20.	124
1432-37	pp.192-93, [256].	Brounflete	Joan	15-Apr-34	Thu	3-Nov-34	Wed	202	0	21-Nov-35	383	0	CCR, 1435-41, pp. 01-09.	585
1432-37	pp. 240-42, [334].	Eryngton	John	4-Nov-34	Thu	30-Dec-34	Thu	56	0	1-Jul-35	183	0	CFR, 1430-37, pp. 238-39.	239
1432-37	pp. 351-52, [498].	Greystok (de)	John	21-Aug-36	Tue	7-Oct-36	Sun	47	0	6-Nov-36	30	0	CFR, 1430-37, p. 313.	77
1432-37	pp. 479-80, [693].	Neville	Elizabeth	27-Oct-36	Sat	10-Nov-36	Sat	14	0	24-Nov-36	14	0	CFR, 1430-37, p. 306.	28
1432-37	pp. 480-82, [694].	Ogle	Robert	27-Aug-36	Mon	7-Oct-36	Sun	41	0	8-Nov-36	32	0	CFR, 1430-37, p. 307.	73
1432-37	pp. 35-36, [61b].	Percy	Henry	6-Nov-32	Thu	10-Dec-32	Wed	34	0	20-Feb-33	72	0	CFR, 1430-37, p. 140.	106
1432-37	pp. 483-84, [698].	Umfraville	Robert	10-Feb-37	Sun	15-Apr-37	Mon	64	0	14-May-37	29	0	CFR, 1430-37, pp. 327-28.	93
1437-42	p. 291, [354].	Ask	Roger	28-Jun-40	Tue	8-Oct-40	Sat	102	0	27-Nov-40	50	0	CFR, 1437-45, p. 173.	152
1437-42	pp. 299-300, [368].	Belasys	John	26-Jun-40	Sun	6-Oct-40	Thu	102	0	11-Nov-40	36	0	CFR, 1437-45, p. 176.	138
1437-42	p. 122, [189].	Ingoe	Christine	26-Oct-38	Sun	10-Feb-39	Tue	107	0	18-Jun-39	128	0	CFR, 1437-45, p. 96.	235
1437-42	pp. 121-22, [188].	Lilburn	Thomas	28-Sep-38	Sun	20-Oct-38	Mon	22	0	12-Nov-38	23	0	CFR, 1437-45, p. 65.	45
1437-42	pp. 122-23, [190].	Maners	John	28-Sep-38	Sun	20-Oct-38	Mon	22	0	12-Nov-38	23	0	CFR, 1437-45, p. 65.	45
1437-42	pp. 437-38, [516].	Neville	Joan	16-Nov-40	Wed	09-Jan-41	Mon	54	0	7-Feb-41	29	0	CCR, 1435-41, pp. 406-11.	83
1442-47	pp. 125-26, [217].	Tailboys	Walter	20-Apr-44	Mon	19-Jun-44	Fri	60	0	27-Aug-44	69	0	CFR, 1437-45, p. 292.	129
1442-47	pp.131-33, [223].	Woddrington	John	3-Mar-44	Tue	9-Apr-44	Thu	37	0	12-May-44	33	0	CFR, 1437-45, p. 294.	70
Sub Total								1511	0		2348	0		3859
Add leap days								0			0			
Total days								1511			2348			3859
Average days								60			94			154

Note that the date the writ for Isabel Swan was executed is queried in the calendar.

Progress of Selected IPMs for Northumberland During the Reign of Henry VI, 1422-30

CIPM volume	Reference	Surname	Forename	Date of writ <i>diem clausit extremum</i> (dce)	Day	Date writ dce executed	Day	No. of days from date of writ dce to execution	Leap days	Date seisin ordered	No. of days from execution to writ of seisin	Leap days	Seisin reference	Total days from date of writ dce to date of writ ordering seisin
1422-27	pp. 600-01, [671].	Claveryng	John	3-Apr-25	Tue	8-Sep-25	Sat	158	0	10-Nov-25	63	0	CFR, 1422-30, p. 113.	221
1422-27	pp. 388-89, [445].	FitzHugh	Henry	13-Jan-25	Sat	7-Apr-25	Sat	84	0	9-Aug-25	124	0	CCR, 1422-29, pp. 165-168.	208
1422-27	p. 656, [757].	Harbottle	Isabel	1-Nov-26	Fri	11-Nov-26	Mon	10	0	19-Dec-26	38	0	CFR, 1422-30, pp. 158-59.	48
1422-27	pp. 108-09, [62].	Hoggisson	Eleanor	1-May-23	Sat	14-Jun-23	Mon	44	0	8-Jul-23	24	0	CFR, 1422-30, p. 40.	68
1422-27	pp. 153-54, [131].	Mitford	William	20-Apr-23	Fri	10-Jun-23	Thu	51	0	10-Nov-23	153	0	CCR, 1422-29, pp. 80-82.	204
1427-32	p. 100, [194].	Ask	Eleanor	24-Oct-28	Sun	13-Nov-28	Sat	20	0	20-May-30	553	0	CFR, 1422-30, p. 324.	573
Sub Total								367	0		955	0		1322
Add leap days								0			0			
Total days								367			955			1322
Average days								61			159			220

Progress of Selected IPMs for Northumberland During the Reign of Henry VI, 1430-47

CIPM volume	Reference	Surname	Forename	Date of writ <i>diem clausit extremum</i> (dce)	Day	Date writ dce executed	Day	No. of days from date of writ dce to execution	Leap days	Date seisin ordered	No. of days from execution to writ of seisin	Leap days	Seisin reference	Total days from date of writ dce to date of writ ordering seisin
1427-32	pp. 363-65, [697].	Delaval	Joan	12-Jul-32	Sat	20-Aug-32	Wed	39	0	15-Oct-32	56	0	CFR, 1430-37, p. 128.	95
1427-32	p. 242, [472].	Neville	John	22-Apr-31	Sun	16-Jun-31	Sat	55	0	7-Jul-31	21	0	CFR, 1430-37, p. 45.	76
1427-32	p. 189, [365].	Swan	Isabel	20-May-30	Sat	6-Jul-30	Thu	47	0	11-Oct-30	97	0	CFR, 1430-37, p. 19.	144
1432-37	pp. 35-36, [61b].	Percy	Henry	6-Nov-32	Thu	10-Dec-32	Wed	34	0	20-Feb-33	72	0	CFR, 1430-37, p. 140.	106
1432-37	pp. 192-93, [256].	Brounflete	Joan	15-Apr-34	Thu	3-Nov-34	Wed	202	0	21-Nov-35	383	0	CCR, 1435-41, pp. 01-09.	585
1432-37	pp. 240-42, [334].	Eryngton	John	4-Nov-34	Thu	30-Dec-34	Thu	56	0	1-Jul-35	183	0	CFR, 1430-37, pp. 238-39.	239
1432-37	pp. 351-52, [498].	Greystok (de)	John	21-Aug-36	Tue	7-Oct-36	Sun	47	0	6-Nov-36	30	0	CFR, 1430-37, p. 313.	77
1432-37	pp. 480-82, [694].	Ogle	Robert	27-Aug-36	Mon	7-Oct-36	Sun	41	0	8-Nov-36	32	0	CFR, 1430-37, p. 307.	73
1432-37	pp. 479-80, [693].	Neville	Elizabeth	27-Oct-36	Sat	10-Nov-36	Sat	14	0	24-Nov-36	14	0	CFR, 1430-37, p. 306.	28
1432-37	pp. 483-84, [698].	Umfraville	Robert	10-Feb-37	Sun	15-Apr-37	Mon	64	0	14-May-37	29	0	CFR, 1430-37, pp. 327-28.	93
1437-42	pp. 121-22, [188].	Lilburn	Thomas	28-Sep-38	Sun	20-Oct-38	Mon	22	0	12-Nov-38	23	0	CFR, 1437-45, p. 65.	45
1437-42	pp. 122-23, [190].	Maners	John	28-Sep-38	Sun	20-Oct-38	Mon	22	0	12-Nov-38	23	0	CFR, 1437-45, p. 65.	45
1437-42	p. 122, [189].	Ingoe	Christine	26-Oct-38	Sun	10-Feb-39	Tue	107	0	18-Jun-39	128	0	CFR, 1437-45, p. 96.	235
1437-42	pp. 299-300, [368].	Belasys	John	26-Jun-40	Sun	6-Oct-40	Thu	102	0	11-Nov-40	36	0	CFR, 1437-45, p. 176.	138
1437-42	p. 291, [354].	Ask	Roger	28-Jun-40	Tue	8-Oct-40	Sat	102	0	27-Nov-40	50	0	CFR, 1437-45, p. 173.	152
1437-42	pp. 437-38, [516].	Neville	Joan	16-Nov-40	Wed	09-Jan-41	Mon	54	0	7-Feb-41	29	0	CCR, 1435-41, pp. 406-11.	83
1442-47	pp. 125-26, [217].	Taylboys	Walter	20-Apr-44	Mon	19-Jun-44	Fri	60	0	27-Aug-44	69	0	CFR, 1437-45, p. 292.	129
1442-47	pp.131-33, [223].	Woddrington	John	3-Mar-44	Tue	9-Apr-44	Thu	37	0	12-May-44	33	0	CFR, 1437-45, p. 294.	70
Sub Total								1105	0		1308	0		2413
Add leap days								0			0			
Total days								1105			1308			2413
Average days								61			73			134

Progress of Selected IPMs for Berkshire During the Reign of Henry IV (1399-1413)

CIPM volume	Reference	Surname	Forename	Date of writ <i>diem clausit extremum</i> (dce)	Day	Date writ dce executed	Day	No. of days from date of writ dce to execution	Leap days	Date seisin ordered	No. of days from execution to writ of seisin	Leap days	Seisin reference	Total days from date of writ dce to date of writ ordering seisin
1399-1405	p. 360, [1045].	Dabriggecourt	Elizabeth	2-Oct-04	Thu	8-Oct-04	Wed	6	0	3-Dec-04	56	0	CFR , 1399-1405, p. 282.	62
1399-1405	p. 192, [589].	Fitzwaryn	John	2-Jan-02	Mon	12-Jan-02	Thu	10	0	22-Feb-02	41	0	CFR , 1399-1405, p. 153.	51
1399-1405	p. 362, [1055].	Mare (de la)	Thomas	29-Mar-05	Sun	6-Apr-05	Mon	8	0	14-Apr-05	8	0	CFR , 1399-1405, p. 304.	16
1399-1405	p. 147, [461].	Hastyngs	Phillipa	8-Oct-00	Fri	5-Nov-00	Fri	28	0	7-Nov-00	2	0	CCR , 1399-1402, pp. 233-35.	30
1399-1405	p. 16, [39].	Penbrugge	Margaret	8-Nov-99	Sat	10-Feb-00	Tue	94	0	17-Feb-00	7	0	CFR , 1399-1405, pp. 52-53.	101
1399-1405	p. 193, [592].	Poyle	Thomas	14-Mar-02	Tue	18-Mar-02	Sat	4	0	2-Apr-02	15	0	CFR , 1399-1405, p. 156.	19
1399-1405	p. 389, [1137].	Seyntomer	Elizabeth	13-Feb-05	Fri	5-Mar-05	Thu	20	0	11-Mar-05	6	0	CCR , 1402-05, pp. 427-40.	26
1405-1413	p. 139, [397].	Aleyn	Robert	28-Sep-11	Mon	10-Oct-11	Sat	12	0	5-Nov-11	26	0	CFR , 1405-13, p. 222.	38
1405-1413	p. 98, [290].	Bello Campo (Beauchamp)	Margaret	24-Jan-07	Mon	11-Feb-07	Fri	18	0	1-Mar-07	18	0	CCR , 1405-09, pp. 182-88.	36
1405-1413	pp. 142-43, [403].	Chelrey	Thomas	5-Nov-07	Sat	15-Nov-07	Tue	10	0	8-May-08	175	1	CCR , 1405-09, pp. 317-323.	186
1405-1413	p. 8, [34].	Estbury	John	18-Aug-06	Wed	24-Aug-06	Tue	6	0	9-Nov-06	77	0	CFR , 1405-13, p. 71.	83
1405-1413	p. 188, [514].	Huse	Henry	12-May-09	Sun	31-May-09	Fri	19	0	3-Jul-09	33	0	CFR , 1405-13, pp. 154-55.	52
1405-1413	p. 344, [965].	Langforde	William	13-Sep-11	Sun	5-Oct-11	Mon	22	0	18-Dec-11	74	0	CCR , 1409-13, pp. 254-57.	96
1405-1413	p. 176, [472].	Lysle (de)	John	8-Feb-08	Wed	2-Mar-08	Fri	23	1	22-Mar-08	20	0	CCR , 1405-09, pp. 317-23.	44
1405-1413	pp. 346-47, [971].	Pole (de la)	Elizabeth	19-Dec-11	Sat	30-Jan-12	Sat	42	0	10-Jul-12	162	1	CFR , 1405-13, pp. 235-36.	205
Sub Total								322	1		720	2		1045
Add leap days								1			2			
Total days								323			722			1045
Average days								22			48			70

Progress of Selected IPMs for Berkshire During the Reign of Henry V (1413-22)

CIPM volume	Reference	Surname	Forename	Date of writ <i>diem clausit extremum</i> (dce)	Day	Date writ dce executed	Day	No. of days from date of writ dce to execution	Leap days	Date seisin ordered	No. of days from execution to writ of seisin	Leap days	Seisin reference	Total days from date of writ dce to date of writ ordering seisin
1413-1418	pp. 251-52, [810].	Berkeley	Thomas	17-Jul-17	Sat	29-Oct-17	Fri	104	0	15-Dec-17	47	0	CFR, 1413-22, p. 217.	151
1413-1418	pp. 230-31, [740].	Corbet	Robert	17-Jul-17	Sat	31-Jul-17	Sat	14	0	23-Sep-17	54	0	CCR, 1413-19, pp. 401-04.	68
1413-1418	p. 11, [40].	Ferrers	Robert	21-Mar-13	Tue	5-Apr-13	Wed	15	0	14-Apr-13	9	0	CFR, 1413-22, p. 16.	24
1413-1418	p. 113, [368].	Phelipp	John	8-Oct-15	Tue	21-Oct-15	Mon	13	0	28-Nov-15	38	0	CCR, 1413-19, pp. 234-36.	51
1413-1418	pp. 34-35, [108].	Talbot	Ankaret	8-Jun-13	Thu	30-Jun-13	Fri	22	0	15-Jul-13	15	0	CFR, 1413-22, pp. 29-30.	37
1413-1418	p. 169, [542].	West	Ida	7-Nov-16	Sat	16-Jan-17	Sat	70	0	26-Feb-17	41	0	CFR, 1413-22, p. 191.	111
1418-1422	p. 54, [177].	Bienham	John	28-May-19	Sun	13-Jun-19	Tue	16	0	26-Jun-19	13	0	CFR, 1413-19, p. 281.	29
1418-1422	p. 68, [232].	Corbet	Joan	10-Feb-20	Sat	22-Feb-20	Thu	12	0	5-Jul-20	134	1	CCR, 1419-22, pp. 81-83.	147
1418-1422	pp. 101-02, [345].	Courtney (Earl of Devon)	Edward	16-Dec-19	Sat	8-Jan-20	Mon	23	0	6-Feb-20	29	0	CFR, 1413-22, p. 327.	52
1418-1422	p. 174, [577].	Romayn	John	24-Jul-20	Wed	10-Sep-20	Tue	48	0	17-Dec-21	463	0	CCR, 1419-22, pp. 179-180.	511
1418-1422	p. 73, [253].	Stapilton	Miles	14-Apr-19	Fri	5-Jun-19	Mon	52	0	14-Jul-19	39	0	CCR, 1419-22, pp. 07-18.	91
Sub Total								389	0		882	1		1272
Add leap days								0			1			
Total days								389			883			1272
Average days								35			80			115

Progress of Selected IPMs for Berkshire During the Reign of Henry VI (1422-47)

CIPM volume	Reference	Surname	Forename	Date of writ <i>diem clausit extremum</i> (dce)	Day	Date writ dce executed	Day	No. of days from date of writ dce to execution	Leap days	Date seisin ordered	No. of days from execution to writ of seisin	Leap days	Seisin reference	Total days from date of writ dce to date of writ ordering seisin
1422-27	pp. 271-72, [285].	Beaumont	Isabel	29-Apr-24	Sat	6-Jun-24	Wed	38	0	17-Jun-24	11	0	CCR , 1422-29, pp. 112-19.	49
1422-27	pp. 394-95, [450].	Besiles	Peter	12-Mar-25	Mon	27-Sep-25	Thu	199	0	13-Dec-25	77	0	CCR , 1422-29, pp. 229-30.	276
1422-27	pp. 642-43, [738].	Bienham	Philip	14-May-27	Wed	6-Jun-27	Fri	23	0	26-Jun-27	20	0	CCR , 1422-29, pp. 304-11.	43
1422-27	pp. 310-11, [340].	Clinton	Elizabeth	2-Oct-23	Sat	4-Nov-23	Thu	33	0	1-Dec-23	27	0	CFR , 1422-30, p. 65.	60
1422-27	pp. 293-94, [285].	Hankeford	William	4-Jan-24	Tue	27-Apr-24	Thu	114	1	5-Jun-24	39	0	CCR , 1422-29, pp. 108-12.	154
1422-27	pp. 127-28, [93].	Hille	Robert	28-Apr-23	Wed	7-Jul-23	Wed	70	0	5-Nov-23	121	0	CCR , 1422-29, pp. 99-101.	191
1422-27	p. 546, [610].	Holand (widow of John, Earl of Huntingdon)	Elizabeth	26-Nov-25	Mon	23-Jan-26	Wed	58	0	8-Mar-26	44	0	CFR , 1422-30, p. 127.	102
1422-27	p. 186, [175].	Lovell	Maud	12-May-23	Wed	3-Jun-23	Thu	22	0	7-Jul-23	34	0	CFR , 1422-30, p. 42.	56
1422-27	pp. 267-68, [279].	Poyle (de la)	John	2-Nov-23	Tue	10-Nov-23	Wed	8	0	28-Nov-23	18	0	CCR , 1422-29, pp. 82-90.	26
1422-27	pp. 647-48, [745].	Stokes	William	16-Jan-27	Thu	14-Feb-27	Fri	29	0	25-Feb-27	11	0	CFR , 1422-30, p. 169.	40
1422-27	p. 515, [548].	Zouche	Elizabeth	20-Nov-25	Tue	23-Jan-26	Wed	64	0	12-Feb-26	20	0	CFR , 1422-30, p. 127.	84
1427-32	p. 128, [250].	Brocas	Joan	8-May-29	Sun	28-Jun-29	Tue	51	0	1-Jul-29	3	0	CCR , 1422-29, pp. 440-44.	54
1427-32	p. 272, [526].	Carewe	Thomas	27-Jan-31	Sat	16-Apr-31	Mon	79	0	10-May-31	24	0	CCR , 1429-35, pp. 84-87.	103
1427-32	p.340, [656].	Dabryecourt	John	6-Oct-31	Sat	25-Oct-31	Thu	19	0	8-Nov-31	14	0	CCR , 1429-35, p. 135.	33
1427-32	p. 46, [95].	Erpyngham	Thomas	1-Jul-28	Thu	8-Jul-28	Thu	7	0	16-Nov-28	131	0	CCR , 1422-29, pp. 413-19.	138
1427-32	p. 229, [432].	Gyffard	Alice	8-May-31	Tue	13-Jun-31	Wed	36	0	6-Jul-31	23	0	CFR , 1430-37, p. 45.	59
1427-32	p. 333, [639].	James	Robert	16-Feb-32	Sat	13-Mar-32	Thu	26	1	22-Mar-32	9	0	CCR , 1429-35, pp. 143-48.	36
1427-32	p. 331, [636].	Mare (de la)	Robert	14-Jul-31	Sat	27-Oct-31	Sat	105	0	11-Nov-31	15	0	CCR , 1429-35, pp. 141-43.	120
1427-32	pp. 145-46, [280].	Montague (Earl of Salisbury)	Thomas	24-Nov-28	Wed	27-Jan-29	Thu	64	0	20-Feb-29	24	0	CFR , 1422-30, pp. 262-63.	88
1427-32	p. 311, [589].	Overy	Thomas	20-Jun-31	Wed	1-Jul-31	Sun	11	0	24-Jul-31	23	0	CFR , 1430-37, pp. 47-48.	34
1427-32	p. 184, [352].	Pever	Thomas	22-Sep-29	Thu	26-Oct-29	Wed	34	0	24-Nov-29	29	0	CCR , 1429-35, pp. 04-09.	63
1427-32	p. 157, [299].	Ponynges de Sancto Johanne	Thomas	14-Mar-29	Mon	13-Apr-29	Wed	30	0	28-Nov-29	229	0	CFR , 1422-30, p. 300.	259
1432-37	pp. 141-42, [185].	Botreaux	Elizabeth	2-Jun-33	Tue	6-Oct-33	Tue	126	0	27-Nov-33	52	0	CFR , 1430-37, pp. 177-78.	178
1432-37	p. 474, [686].	Chaucer	Maud	2-May-37	Thu	23-May-37	Thu	21	0	22-Jun-37	30	0	CCR , 1435-41, pp. 86-95.	51
1432-37	pp. 254-55, [349].	Chaucer	Thomas	30-Nov-34	Tue	13-Apr-35	Wed	134	0	11-May-35	28	0	CCR , 1429-35, pp. 330-41.	162
1432-37	pp. 340-41, [481].	Ferrers	Edmund	29-Dec-35	Thu	20-Jan-36	Fri	22	0	9-Feb-36	20	0	CFR , 1430-37, p. 272.	42
1432-37	pp. 305-06, [426].	Fitz Waryn	William	17-Dec-35	Sat	21-Apr-36	Sat	126	1	10-Jul-36	80	0	CFR , 1430-37, pp. 290-91.	207
1432-37	p. 60, [82].	Mortimer (widow of Edmund, Earl of March)	Anne	26-Sep-32	Fri	31-Oct-32	Fri	35	0	26-Nov-32	26	0	CFR , 1430-37, p. 122.	61
1432-37	p. 149, [200].	Talbot	Margaret	26-Apr-34	Mon	26-May-34	Wed	30	0	18-Jun-34	23	0	CCR , 1429-35, pp. 273-85.	53
1432-37	p. 12, [23].	Vaghan	Thomas ap Philip	18-Dec-32	Thu	7-May-33	Thu	140	0	18-Aug-33	103	0	CCR , 1429-35, pp. 219-21.	243

Progress of Selected IPMs for Berkshire During the Reign of Henry VI (1422-47) - continued

1437-42	pp. 420-21, [504].	Courtenay (Countess of Devon)	Anne	1-Feb-41	Wed	13-Feb-41	Mon	12	0	18-Feb-41	5	0	CFR, 1437-45, p. 185.	17
1437-42	pp. 473-74, [571].	Harwedon	Margery	10-Oct-41	Tue	18-Oct-41	Wed	8	0	7-Nov-41	20	0	CFR, 1437-45, p. 204	28
1437-42	p. 411, [492].	Sifrewast	John	24-Jun-41	Sat	2-Nov-41	Thu	131	0	14-Nov-41	12	0	CCR, 1441-47, pp. 03-05.	143
1442-47	pp. 212-13, [371].	Crofton	Alice	22-May-46	Sun	11-Jun-46	Sat	20	0	24-Jul-46	43	0	CCR, 1441-47, pp. 332-35.	63
Sub Total								1925	3		1388	0		3316
Add leap days								3			0			0
Total days								1928			1388			3316
Average days								57			41			98

Progress of Selected IPMs for Berkshire During the Reign of Henry VI, 1422-30

CIPM volume	Reference	Surname	Forename	Date of writ <i>diem clausit extremum</i> (dce)	Day	Date writ dce executed	Day	No. of days from date of writ dce to execution	Leap days	Date seisin ordered	No. of days from execution to writ of seisin	Leap days	Seisin reference	Total days from date of writ dce to date of writ ordering seisin
1422-27	pp. 271-72, [285].	Beaumont	Isabel	29-Apr-24	Sat	6-Jun-24	Wed	38	0	17-Jun-24	11	0	CCR , 1422-29, pp. 112-19.	49
1422-27	pp. 394-95, [450].	Besiles	Peter	12-Mar-25	Mon	27-Sep-25	Thu	199	0	13-Dec-25	77	0	CCR , 1422-29, pp. 229-30.	276
1422-27	pp. 642-43, [738].	Bienham	Philip	14-May-27	Wed	6-Jun-27	Fri	23	0	26-Jun-27	20	0	CCR , 1422-29, pp. 304-11.	43
1422-27	pp. 310-11, [340].	Clinton	Elizabeth	2-Oct-23	Sat	4-Nov-23	Thu	33	0	1-Dec-23	27	0	CFR , 1422-30, p. 65.	60
1422-27	pp. 293-94, [285].	Hankeford	William	4-Jan-24	Tue	27-Apr-24	Thu	114	1	5-Jun-24	39	0	CCR , 1422-29, pp. 108-12.	154
1422-27	pp. 127-28, [93].	Hille	Robert	28-Apr-23	Wed	7-Jul-23	Wed	70	0	5-Nov-23	121	0	CCR , 1422-29, pp. 99-101.	191
1422-27	p. 546, [610].	Holand (widow of John, Earl of Huntington)	Elizabeth	26-Nov-25	Mon	23-Jan-26	Wed	58	0	8-Mar-26	44	0	CFR , 1422-30, p. 127.	102
1422-27	p. 186, [175].	Lovell	Maud	12-May-23	Wed	3-Jun-23	Thu	22	0	7-Jul-23	34	0	CFR , 1422-30, p. 42.	56
1422-27	pp. 267-68, [279].	Poyle (de la)	John	2-Nov-23	Tue	10-Nov-23	Wed	8	0	28-Nov-23	18	0	CCR , 1422-29, pp. 82-90.	26
1422-27	pp. 647-48, [745].	Stokes	William	16-Jan-27	Thu	14-Feb-27	Fri	29	0	25-Feb-27	11	0	CFR , 1422-30, p. 169.	40
1422-27	p. 515, [548].	Zouche	Elizabeth	20-Nov-25	Tue	23-Jan-26	Wed	64	0	12-Feb-26	20	0	CFR , 1422-30, p. 127.	84
1427-32	p. 128, [250].	Brocas	Joan	8-May-29	Sun	28-Jun-29	Tue	51	0	1-Jul-29	3	0	CCR , 1422-29, pp. 440-44.	54
1427-32	p. 46, [95].	Erpyngham	Thomas	1-Jul-28	Thu	8-Jul-28	Thu	7	0	16-Nov-28	131	0	CCR , 1422-29, pp. 413-19.	138
1427-32	pp. 145-46, [280].	Montague (Earl of Salisbury)	Thomas	24-Nov-28	Wed	27-Jan-29	Thu	64	0	20-Feb-29	24	0	CFR , 1422-30, pp. 262-63.	88
1427-32	p. 184, [352].	Pever	Thomas	22-Sep-29	Thu	26-Oct-29	Wed	34	0	24-Nov-29	29	0	CCR , 1429-35, pp. 04-09.	63
1427-32	p. 157, [299].	Ponynges de Sancto Johanne	Thomas	14-Mar-29	Mon	13-Apr-29	Wed	30	0	28-Nov-29	229	0	CFR , 1422-30, p. 300.	259
Sub Total								844	1		838	0		1683
Add leap days								1			0			0
Total days								845			838			1683
Average days								53			52			105

Progress of Selected IPMs for Berkshire During the Reign of Henry VI, 1430-47

CIPM volume	Reference	Surname	Forename	Date of writ <i>diem clausit extremum</i> (dce)	Day	Date writ dce executed	Day	No. of days from date of writ dce to execution	Leap days	Date seisin ordered	No. of days from execution to writ of seisin	Leap days	Seisin reference	Total days from date of writ dce to date of writ ordering seisin
1427-32	p. 272, [526].	Carewe	Thomas	27-Jan-31	Sat	16-Apr-31	Mon	79	0	10-May-31	24	0	CCR, 1429-35, pp. 84-87.	103
1427-32	p. 340, [656].	Dabryecourt	John	6-Oct-31	Sat	25-Oct-31	Thu	19	0	8-Nov-31	14	0	CCR, 1429-35, p.135.	33
1427-32	p. 229, [432].	Gyffard	Alice	8-May-31	Tue	13-Jun-31	Wed	36	0	6-Jul-31	23	0	CFR, 1430-37, p. 45.	59
1427-32	p. 333, [639].	James	Robert	16-Feb-32	Sat	13-Mar-32	Thu	26	1	22-Mar-32	9	0	CCR, 1429-35, pp. 143-48.	36
1427-32	p. 331, [636].	Mare (de la)	Robert	14-Jul-31	Sat	27-Oct-31	Sat	105	0	11-Nov-31	15	0	CCR, 1429-35, pp. 141-43.	120
1427-32	p. 311, [589].	Overy	Thomas	20-Jun-31	Wed	1-Jul-31	Sun	11	0	24-Jul-31	23	0	CFR, 1430-37, pp. 47-48.	34
1432-37	pp. 141-42, [185].	Botreaux	Elizabeth	2-Jun-33	Tue	6-Oct-33	Tue	126	0	27-Nov-33	52	0	CFR, 1430-37, pp. 177-78.	178
1432-37	p. 474, [686].	Chaucer	Maud	2-May-37	Thu	23-May-37	Thu	21	0	22-Jun-37	30	0	CCR, 1435-41, pp. 86-95.	51
1432-37	pp. 254-55, [349].	Chaucer	Thomas	30-Nov-34	Tue	13-Apr-35	Wed	134	0	11-May-35	28	0	CCR, 1429-35, pp. 330-41.	162
1432-37	pp. 340-41, [481].	Ferrers	Edmund	29-Dec-35	Thu	20-Jan-36	Fri	22	0	9-Feb-36	20	0	CFR, 1430-37, p. 272.	42
1432-37	pp. 305-06, [426].	Fitz Waryn	William	17-Dec-35	Sat	21-Apr-36	Sat	126	1	10-Jul-36	80	0	CFR, 1430-37, pp. 290-91.	207
1432-37	p. 60, [82].	Mortimer (widow of Edmund, earl of March)	Anne	26-Sep-32	Fri	31-Oct-32	Fri	35	0	26-Nov-32	26	0	CFR, 1430-37, p. 122.	61
1432-37	p. 149, [200].	Talbot	Margaret	26-Apr-34	Mon	26-May-34	Wed	30	0	18-Jun-34	23	0	CCR, 1429-35, pp. 273-85.	53
1432-37	p. 12, [23].	Vaghan	Thomas ap Philip	18-Dec-32	Thu	7-May-33	Thu	140	0	18-Aug-33	103	0	CCR, 1429-35, pp. 219-21.	243
1437-42	pp. 420-21, [504].	Courtenay (Countess of Devon)	Anne	1-Feb-41	Wed	13-Feb-41	Mon	12	0	18-Feb-41	5	0	CFR, 1437-45, p. 185.	17
1437-42	pp. 473-74, [571].	Harwedon	Margery	10-Oct-41	Tue	18-Oct-41	Wed	8	0	7-Nov-41	20	0	CFR, 1437-45, p. 204	28
1437-42	p. 411, [492].	Sifrewast	John	24-Jun-41	Sat	2-Nov-41	Thu	131	0	14-Nov-41	12	0	CCR, 1441-47, pp. 03-05.	143
1442-47	pp. 212-13, [371].	Crofton	Alice	22-May-46	Sun	11-Jun-46	Sat	20	0	24-Jul-46	43	0	CCR, 1441-47, pp. 332-35.	63
Sub Total								1081	2		550	0		1633
Add leap days								2			0			0
Total days								1083			550			1633
Average days								60			31			91

APPENDIX 19

Published Paper

SPIRITUAL KINSHIP, GODPARENTHOOD AND PROOFS OF AGE OF HEIRS TO NORTHUMBERLAND ESTATES, 1401–1472*

Northern History, XLIX: 2, September 2012

— The University of Leeds, 2012 DOI: 10.1179/0078172X12Z.00000000011

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